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The Church and Atheists

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An Ethnic Backlash? — *James W. Carey*

A Labor Backlash? — *Thomas R. Brooks*

Suffragette Nuns — *Gunnar D. Kumlien*

Venice Observed — *Ronald Steel*

The Senate Races — *William V. Shannon*

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THE COMMONWEAL
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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

Away from Myths

THE CANDIDACY of Barry Goldwater has thrown into shadow the major steps forward the nation has taken while the Senator has been urging us to march the other way. The civil rights law and the Supreme Court's apportionment decision were extraordinary acts, and taken together, will transform the politics of the next generation. Both represent a corner being turned—a step away from a reactionary past and into a healthy political future.

The tax-cut is a no less important breakthrough. The long delay and the ritualized incensing of the balanced budget are disheartening, but they *were* overcome. And the months that have passed since the tax cut was voted have sustained the prognosis behind the original Kennedy proposal of 1962. The economic stagnation of the Eisenhower years has given way to forty months of steady expansion, the longest in the peacetime history of the nation. Many acts of the Kennedy-Johnson administration have helped: the Accelerated Public Works Act, the Area Redevelopment Act, the Manpower Development and Training Act, the Trade Expansion Act. But the tax cut was the hardest to push through, and may be the most significant.

According to its opponents, the tax cut, coming on top of a deficit, should have produced an inflationary spiral. It hasn't. As *Business Week* notes, the current upswing shows no sign of topping out, and the chart of industrial prices has barely shown a move from a horizontal line in over forty months. And the tax cut is apparently fulfilling the best hopes of its advocates. Take-home pay has risen 2 percentage points, and the nation is heading into a period of substantial increases in consumer spending and capital investment. We are slowly inching down toward four percent unemployment—the goal set by President Kennedy.

The battle is far from won. It is still doubtful whether a Congressional consensus can be raised for the kind of quick tax cut President Kennedy originally sought. It took Congress a year and a half to bring itself to approve the recent cut, and by that time many economic conditions had changed completely. By contrast it took the British Government only four months to get a tax cut in force, and unemployment was cut in half within six months. The reluctance of Congress to take one eye off the balanced budget and fix it on the ideal of full employment is notorious. But it may be happening. The idea that general prosperity is ultimately tied to the employment rate is gradually penetrating the electorate. Even Arthur F. Burns, economic sachem of the Eisenhower administration, admits that he believes "the American people are more firmly committed to that ideal of full employment than they were a century ago. If the Employment Act were recast today, it might even be christened 'the Full Employment Act.'"

THE PROBLEM is to consolidate the gains. It is still true that no advanced economy in Western Europe gives as low priority to the objective of full employment, or interprets it as loosely, as does the United States; and probably no comparably advanced economy is presided over by legislators who are so repelled by the thought of giving the head of government the standing power to cut certain taxes, within set limits, as a weapon against rapidly changing economic problems. It is precisely this latter power that provides the flexibility and speed necessary to combat the threat of a quick decline; yet Congress let President Kennedy know that it viewed the request as simply another attempt by the executive to encroach upon Congress' constitutional powers. The fact that Congress' prerogatives would be safeguarded by the limits it would set for a President's action fell on the customary deaf ears.

President Johnson may be able to do more with Congress, particularly with a massive mandate on

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November 3. The partial victory of President Kennedy should be followed up by an attempt to exploit the cracks in the old economic myths and to get at the roots of chronic unemployment and poverty. As Senator Joseph Clark said in Congress on October 1, "We can eliminate the business cycle, just as several European nations have. . . . The success of the President's tax cut has dealt (the economic) myths a death blow. We must make sure that they do not revive."

ELECTION IN BRITAIN

Poet and Prime Minister

London

CHRISTOPHER Grieve will stand for Parliament for Kinross and West Perth as a candidate of the Communist Party. This is news, not because Mr. Grieve has any chance of winning, but because he is, under his pen name of Hugh McDiarmid, Scotland's best modern poet, and because the seat he is contesting is presently occupied by another Scot, Sir Alec Douglas-Home. It must surely be the first time that voters have had the opportunity of choosing between a Poet and a Prime Minister.

The Party's goal in opposing Sir Alec is, of course, political propaganda. For every radio or television speech that the Prime Minister makes, Mr. Grieve will claim equal time; if his claims are refused, as they certainly will be, he will claim a breach of the Representation of the People Act, and move to invalidate Sir Alec's election. The annoyance-value of the plan may very well be considerable, particularly if the Tories should happen to win.

The choice of a poet to perform this role of political nuisance should not be taken as evidence that British Communists have gone literary, or suffered a relapse into Thirty-ish intellectualism. They have simply chosen their best known—and indeed their only—distinguished member. Hugh McDiarmid's reputation has grown more slowly than his contemporaries' (he is only a few years younger than T. S. Eliot), but few British critics would now deny that he is among the best of living poets. His work has earned him, at last, something of an international reputation, as well as a Civil List pension "for services to Scottish literature," and an honorary LL.D. from Edinburgh University. At a time when the Communist intelligentsia in Britain is nearly as unimpressive as it is in the United States, Hugh McDiarmid is simply all there is.

The Civil List pension might cause McDiarmid some trouble if he were to be elected. Some interpreters of British electoral law argue that holders of such Crown "offices of profit" are barred from public office (a prohibition which is also imposed upon idiots, criminals, and peers of the realm). The Party argues that in any case the law does not bar a man from running in vain—presumably even idiots and peers can do that—and that if he is elected he can resign his pension; he has his opponent's example, after all, of how to resign your way into the House of Commons.

But as the Communist leaders look over their candidate's record they must have more serious anxieties than what to do if he's elected; for the political career of Hugh McDiarmid has been, to say the least, eccentric. He began as a Fabian, joined the Scottish Nationalist Party in the Twenties, and became a Communist in 1934. In 1945 he stood for Parliament as a Scottish Nationalist; five years later he ran again as an "Independent Nationalist." (In neither campaign did he manage to draw more than about five percent of the votes.) He seems to have left the party for a time, and even served a term as a Labor Party member of a town council, but by 1955 he was enough inclined toward Communism to visit Peking, and the following year he was publicly back in the Party.

McDiarmid's Marxism, insofar as one can work it out from his writings, seems as unpredictable as his Party membership, and as Scottish as his poems. At one time he proposed a Scottish Workers' Republic, a "Red Scotland" that sounds rather more like Tito's Marxism than the orthodox party line, and his Nationalism has never left him, even at his most Marxist moments; though he now approves of Communism as a doctrine, it is clear that he still has little use for the Communist Party of Great Britain, an organization that does not sufficiently recognize the sovereignty of Scotland. The fierce Scottishness that makes McDiarmid a great poet won't make him a very restful candidate.

McDiarmid's campaign is sure to be lively, however unorthodox it may seem to his party; his previous political activities have always been entertaining even when not persuasive, and his more recent appearance with Lord Russell at a disarmament rally in Trafalgar Square was a great success. The effects of McDiarmid's literary skills on his campaign are difficult to imagine. His remarks at his first press conference suggest that his platform technique will be vigorous, rather than delicate: he referred to his Tory opponent as "a zombie personifying the obsolescent traditions of an aristocratic and big landlord order," and described his former colleagues of the Labor Party, in a striking metaphor, as "one leg of the scissors used to stifle policies which are a real challenge to the Tories and monopoly capitalism" (*can*

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scissors stifle, one wonders?).

To an American, Hugh McDiarmid's candidacy is one more reminder that British politics are, and always have been, more intellectually respectable than our own. At least from the time of Disraeli on, literary ability has not been considered a disqualification for a seat in the Commons, and the present membership includes a number of able writers. One can't help speculating on the improvement to American electioneering, if our own writers could be persuaded to follow Mr. McDiarmid's example. Running James Baldwin for Governor of Alabama or James T. Farrell for Mayor of Chicago could provide equally high-level annoyance for established politicians.

SAMUEL HYNES

WASHINGTON REPORT

The Senate Races

IF THE PRESENT trend of opinion across the nation holds through November 3, the Democrats will increase their strength in the Senate. This prospect is remarkably different from what leaders in both parties had expected as recently as six months ago. The sharp gain in Democratic prospects is due almost entirely to the nomination of Senator Barry Goldwater as the Republican presidential candidate. Goldwater is acting as a heavy drag on his party's congressional candidates everywhere except in the Deep South and, it now appears, will prevent them from capitalizing on their potential opportunities.

If the presidential contest were close, this would be a good year for Republican candidates for the Senate because with the opposition holding 26 of the 35 seats being contested, they have more targets to shoot at. Eleven of the 26 Democratic seats had earlier been regarded as definitely vulnerable. For reasons of personality and political history, the Republican-held seats were thought to be safe. The Democrats were expected to lose Senate seats because, in their landslide victory of 1958, they triumphed in normally Republican territory such as Maine, Ohio, Indiana, North Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. Fluke circumstances accounted for some of these upsets. In Ohio, Stephen Young unexpectedly defeated John Bricker because of an outpouring of labor sentiment in a right-to-work referendum. In Utah, Frank Moss was elected with a minority of the vote because ex-Governor Bracken Lee, running as an independent, split the Republican majority. These lucky breaks could not reasonably be expected to materialize for a second time.

The Democratic victories of 1958 brought to an end a 12-year cycle of conservative dominance in the Senate that had begun with the Republicans elected in the meat shortage election of 1946 ("Had Enough? Vote Republican"). Most of them had been reelected on General Eisenhower's coattails in 1952. With only two or three exceptions, those Republicans were extreme reactionaries, precursors of the present Goldwater control of the GOP. Their names—McCarthy, Malone, Jenner, Kem, Bricker, Dworshak—are already fading into forgotten history, but for a dozen years they set the tone of the Senate. The Republicans controlled the Senate for only four of those 12 years, but during the other eight, the Democrats had paper-thin majorities which enabled the Republicans and their conservative Southern Democratic allies to predominate. They provided the political background for McCarthyism and the innumerable investigations, for the Taft-Hartley Act and other measures designed to restrict unions, for the McCarran Internal Security Act of 1950 (which started out as the Mundt-Nixon Bill) and the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act of 1952, and for the sustained and largely effective opposition to any far-reaching social welfare or civil rights legislation.

The 1958 election, retiring most of the "class of '46" broke the immobilism of the late '40's and '50's and made possible the legislative accomplishments of the Kennedy-Johnson administration. Since the senatorial elections of 1960 and 1962 did not produce any marked shifts either way, that upheaval of six years ago remains the controlling event in the life of the Senate today. It provided the votes for cloture on this year's ambitious civil rights law, for the area redevelopment and anti-poverty programs, for large scale federal aid for colleges, medical schools, mental health centers, and for research in mental retardation. By removing several key protectionists from office, the election of 1958 laid the basis for the Reciprocal Trade Act of 1962. If the Democrats maintain their strength in the Senate on November 3, they will extend liberal control of the Senate through 1970. The marginal seats at stake this year make the difference.

Many commentators often suggest that the present 66-to-34 Democratic majority (it was 67-to-33 until Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina switched parties) proves the two-party system is in an unhealthy condition. But, in fact, when it is borne in mind that on most domestic issues, 10 to 12 Southern Democrats defect and vote with the majority of Republicans, the present lineup only provides the Administration Democrats with a working majority. If Senators Byrd and Robertson of Virginia, Holland and Smathers of Florida, Stennis and Eastland of Mississippi, Ervin and Jordan of North Carolina, and Russell of Georgia plus Lausche

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of Ohio were to follow Thurmond's example and join their fellow conservatives in the Republican Party, the real division in the Senate would become much clearer. (What such a massive infusion of Southern conservatives would do to the prospects of the small group of liberal Republicans is another story.)

As matters now stand less than a month before the election, the Democrats seem likely to lose only two of their 26 seats. Senator Young is an underdog in Ohio against Representative Robert Taft, the son of the late "Mr. Republican." In Oklahoma football coach Bud Wilkinson is favored to win the seat held by the late Senator Robert Kerr.

Several Democratic senators in the Far West may win only by the skin of their teeth, notably Moss in Utah, McGee in Wyoming, and Cannon in Nevada, but public opinion polls and sampling of political opinion by reporters indicate that all three are now ahead. The irony is that the Republicans in these western states were among Senator Goldwater's strongest early boosters, but his candidacy has proved a severe handicap to Republican senatorial candidates largely because he stirs so much uneasiness about his fitness to be Commander-in-Chief in an age of nuclear weapons.

A third possibility for a Republican gain is in Tennessee where pro-Goldwater sentiment on the race issue combined with Democratic factionalism could defeat Rep. Ross Bass, the Democratic candidate for the seat formerly held by the late Senator Kefauver. All other Democratic incumbents are regarded as either fairly certain to win, such as Hart in Michigan and McCarthy in Minnesota, or absolutely certain such as Pastore in Rhode Island and Edward Kennedy in Massachusetts.

Goldwater's candidacy is not only impeding Republican chances of increasing their strength but has made it probable that Democrats will overtake five and possibly seven of the nine Republican incumbents seeking reelection. Senators Williams of Delaware, the upper chamber's champion investigator of graft, and Hruska of Nebraska are considered certain of victory. Senators Scott of Pennsylvania and Prouty of Vermont are likely to win barring enormous Johnson victories in their states. Democracts, however, are now regarded as more than likely to win in Arizona, where Goldwater is relinquishing his seat; in Hawaii where Senator Fong, the first Chinese-American to serve in the Senate, is trailing; in Maryland where Joseph Tydings, the son of the late Senator Millard Tydings, is opposing liberal Republican Senator Beall; in New Mexico where Representative Joseph Montoya is favored to recapture the traditional Spanish-American seat long held by the late Senator Dennis Chavez and now occupied by ex-Governor Edwin Mechem who had himself appointed two years ago to succeed Chavez; and in New York where Robert Kennedy will probably defeat Kenneth Keating.

The Kennedy-Keating contest is naturally the most closely watched senatorial contest in the country this year. If Kennedy wins, the Democrats will have a new front-rank presidential figure in their party. Kennedy chose to run in New York because he wanted to establish an independent base to pursue a long-term career in national politics. If he is elected, he hopes to organize a bloc of "Kennedy Democrats" who would cooperate with the Johnson Administration but operate independently of it. Natural candidates for membership in such a bloc include Kennedy's brother Teddy (Massachusetts), Ribicoff (Connecticut), Bayh (Indiana), Tydings (if he wins in Maryland), and Pierre Salinger (presuming he is elected to a full term in California as he is almost certain to be.) Given the independent nature of senators and the enormous power any chief executive has to divide-and-conquer, one may well doubt the cohesion of such a bloc for very long. But Robert Kennedy thinks the northern Democrats in the Senate are as ripe for leadership as was the New York Democratic Party this summer. President Johnson would be quite content if Kennedy were defeated.

ESTIMATES of Mr. Johnson's prospective plurality in New York range upwards from 500,000 votes with the most popular estimate being approximately 1,000,000. No one expects Kennedy to do remotely that well against Keating. Indeed, if this were not a presidential year and there was therefore a smaller turnout, Keating would probably win. Independent voters, and particularly those in the Jewish community, have reacted unfavorably to Kennedy's candidacy on the grounds that he is too power-oriented, too willing to make accommodations with the old-line county bosses, and not really ideologically committed on issues. There is also a widespread but inarticulate feeling that Kennedy is unfairly exploiting for his own advancement the emotions aroused by his brother's tragic death. But, fairly or not, this emotion exists in great intensity and is working powerfully in Robert Kennedy's favor. He is also capitalizing on his reputation for aggressiveness and hard work. Many New York buses bear the placard, "Let's Put Robert Kennedy to Work for New York." This combination of a tacit sentimental appeal and an overt appeal to self-interest is likely to prove more persuasive to a majority of New Yorkers than Keating's anti-carpetbagger position, epitomized in his slogan, "Keep Keating—New York's Own."

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

This week we are pleased to announce the addition to our staff of Peter Steinfels as Editorial Assistant. Mr. Steinfels, one of the original editors of New City, *is a graduate of Loyola University in Chicago and a doctoral candidate at Columbia.*

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The Layman's Hopes

SHORTLY after this column appears I will, God willing, be in Rome, and in the weeks ahead I hope to report on how the Council strikes me at first hand. Meantime, though, I want to highlight the main themes from a recent collection of statements on what the layman expects from the Council.

The first point that should be made, perhaps, is that a layman's hopes and needs are not essentially very different from those of his fellow Catholics, be they pope, bishops, priests, or religious. The layman has special problems, of course, but the desire for *aggiornamento* in the Church clearly cuts right across lay-clerical lines. Some laymen want nothing more than an up-dating, a modernization; others fear any suggestion of change. The same thing is true of priests, and of bishops and cardinals too, as the debate in St. Peter's demonstrates.

What do those who speak of *aggiornamento*, lay and cleric alike, want? In brief, they fear the Church is becoming irrelevant in the modern world; in the phrase of one of the contributors to this symposium, the problem is that the Church is becoming "alienated" from human values and even from the world itself. Consequently, as one contributor put it, our spiritual life tends to be more neo-Platonic than Christ-like. "To be committed to Christ, to encounter Him in sacrament and Church, is quite unheard of among the majority of members of the Church. The official life and teaching of the Church has been and is authoritarian and legalistic to the point of stamping out most human values. We have been so concerned with beautifully structured philosophical-theological systems that we have forgotten the essence of Christianity—an interpersonal relationship with Christ as Church, as Sacrament."

In view of the leading part played by the American bishops in conciliar discussions of religious liberty and the Jewish question, it is interesting to see how strongly these two items show up in lay statements on the Council. This comment is typical: "The Council will, I pray, make a strong and stirring statement on religious liberty and freedom of conscience. . . . Of almost equal importance is the proposed statement on the Jewish people. . . . The Jew has suffered as a result of centuries of sinful Christian actions and defective Christian theology concerning him. That fact must be redeemed and atoned: only this Council can redeem and atone with an authority proportionate to the sins and scandals of the past."

Another writer, viewing the matter from a different perspective, said: "I am in strong accord with those theologians who argue that the Christian faith, by its very nature, must be a free commitment. . . . The coerced Catholic is not a Catholic at all, but a Pharisee. . . . Catholics should have at least as much religious freedom as those outside the Church. The Good News should be brought to them by loving persuasion, should be gently directed to bending their consciences into the ways of rectitude rather than forcibly to bending their knees. To be concrete: an American Catholic should be as free as a Catholic as he is as an American."

And still another: ". . . the unity of Christendom must remain an idle dream so long as a trace remains of an assumed right to repress dissidents. I also hope that ancient formulas concerning the Jewish people and their religion will be swept into the discard as dramatically as Pope John XXIII changed the Good Friday liturgy."

On the layman's role: "The lay person, either man or woman, wishes to be considered as a first-class creature of God." "If this is, indeed, 'the age of the laity'. . . then the Council surely must lay down at least broad guidelines for the layman both as a member of the people of God and as the point of contact between the Church and the world. This might involve, among other things, the creation of the machinery whereby the lay voice would be heard in the councils of the Church on every level from the parochial to the pontifical. . . ."

And finally, lest all this seem to be overly concerned with life inside the Church: "One would hope to see developed at the Council . . . a fuller and more explicit understanding of the Church as Servant. The parallels of the Church to a monarchical society, which history once made necessary and customs made acceptable, are of questionable value in the modern world. This world has become aware that under a surface of affluence and civilization, two-thirds of her people are hungry and impoverished, and billions are struggling upward from an infrahuman mode of existence to a level of minimal human dignity. In such a world, much of our Renaissance pomp and splendid circumstance actually screen from the eyes of millions the Christ Who is the Church, poor and in labors from His Youth . . . Who came, not to be served but to serve.' A Church poor and serving will force every one of her people to a radical and often painful rethinking of how he must live."

There was more, but I think I have quoted enough to give the flavor of the symposium. And what particularly interested me about it was that these views did not appear in THE COMMONWEAL or *Cross Currents* or *Jubilee* but were collected by Father Vincent A. Yzermans for the popular, mass-circulation *Our Sunday Visitor*. I doubt that these views would have appeared there five years ago, and if much remains to be done, it is worth reminding ourselves that we have come a long way in a short time.

JAMES O'GARA

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Believer and Unbeliever Remain Incomprehensible to Each Other

The Church and Atheists

IGNACE LEPP

FOR TOO LONG the Catholic Church has spoken and acted as if all humanity formed part of its fold. In defining, for example, the dogma of the Assumption, the Church does not seem even to have considered what the eventual reactions of our Protestant brethren would be. John XXIII therefore appeared to be a revolutionary in giving to Vatican II the task of working not only within the Catholic ghetto, but also among all Christians, among all believers, with all mankind.

Since then the ecumenical spirit has made tremendous progress among Catholics. It has produced better understanding and genuinely friendly relations, not only between Christians of different denominations but even with believers belonging to different religions. Yet that is still not enough for an authentic *aggiornamento* of the Church. How many of us find ourselves every day among men and women who declare that they do not belong to any church nor worship a supernatural being, and that they are atheists? And I am not thinking here primarily of countries in which atheism is the official ideology, and which persecute the Church. It is rather the millions upon millions of unbelievers who live in the "free world" that I have in mind.

To be sure, we are no longer in that period when believers and unbelievers accused each other of obscurantism or bad faith. Today the two groups get along all right, but each remains no less incomprehensible to the other; they do not think that in their conversations they should discuss "metaphysical" subjects. Consequently we can rejoice that Pope Paul in his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* gives the Church and believers the duty of taking into account also the vast mass of those who profess unbelief. "Atheists," Paul writes, "we find sometimes moved by noble sentiments, repelled by the mediocrity and selfishness of so many contemporary social milieux." Such language is quite new in the Church.

The believer is troubled in his certitudes by the unbelief of certain people he knows, so that until recently he readily persuaded himself that those who rejected the dogmas of religion did so because they found the moral demands of Christianity too burdensome. Today we are well aware that there are atheists whose morality is beyond reproach and who sometimes give evidence of a generosity that is truly heroic. I recall with emotion a doctor in the north of France who, at the risk of his health and his life, tried out on himself various new medications with which he hoped to help his human brothers. He had a leg and arm amputated, then the other leg and the other arm, without giving up his labors until he died in terrible agony. But this doctor was notoriously atheist.

CONFRONTED by unbelievers whose superior morality is without question, the Christian of today is often inclined to practice that "annexationism" which perhaps irritates atheists even more than the charge of their flight from morality which Christians used before. Men like the doctor just cited are called "Christians without knowing it." But, contrary to what the believer might think, atheists feel not at all flattered to be viewed in this way. They believe, and wish, themselves to be "naturally atheist," and in their very atheism believe they have found sufficient reasons for a type of existence which is not at all content with the banality of everyday life.

I myself must affirm that the extensive psychological knowledge I have of a number of superior unbelievers will not at all permit me to view them as repressed believers. Of course there are some who, for more or less unconscious motives, have driven from their conscience the presence of God, and whose unbelief is consequently of a neurotic nature. But neurotic atheists do not seem to be proportionately more numerous than those other neurotics for whom the faith is a projection of "repressed complexes." Generally it can be said that, at least with educated people, the gauge of the neuroticism of their faith or unbelief resides in the intolerance or fanaticism with which they defend their "convictions." Ecumenism, as John XXIII understood it, is not only demanded by supernatural love but is likewise a sign of psychological health and emotional maturity.

Present-day atheism, at least in the developed countries of Christian civilization, is distinguished from the atheism of other times and other civilizations primarily

FATHER IGNACE LEPP, a professor at the Institut De Psychosynthèse in Paris, is the author of the recently published *The Psychology of Loving* (Helicon).

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by its extraordinary extent. Atheism is no longer the stance of a few individuals who have broken their bond with society nor the privilege of a minority which, as in the 18th century, considers itself particularly "enlightened."

Atheism has become the lot, if not of the majority of our contemporaries, at least of a very high proportion of them, and it tends to become the common norm of human society. Moreover, present-day atheism declares itself to be not only the denial of a specific religion but of all gods; it claims that man and the universe have absolute autonomy. It holds all religious belief to be the enemy of reason, which is implicitly viewed as the sole criterion of truth.

WHAT IS MOST intriguing for the Christian, and what should provide him with much matter for thought, is that many atheists frankly admit that of all religions Christianity represents the purest and most sublime; yet precisely against this Christian religion the most radical and most universal atheism takes its stand. For, whatever its theoretical affirmations, modern atheism is basically and principally anti-Christian. It is significant that among its leading exponents, the two whom most atheists of our day refer to—Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud—have also directed their criticism chiefly against Christianity. Since both were of Jewish origin, Judaism logically should have been what they fought and denied first of all.

But I have noted the same phenomenon among young intellectuals who were natives of North Africa and Asia. As a result of their attendance at European universities they have lost their ancestral faith and declared themselves atheists. But there are few who upon returning home seriously undertake to criticize Mohammedanism or Buddhism; it is against Christianity that they declare their atheism. I am thinking here of a certain Moslem, today one of his country's cabinet ministers, who shows how proud he is of his unbelief. Toward social and educational institutions of Christian inspiration he manifests a hostile intolerance. Yet he does not hesitate to go to the mosque on certain Moslem feasts, although he practices none of Islam's moral or religious prescriptions. It is the Christian religion that nearly all atheists today see as the main obstacle to their concept of man and his happiness. It is only subsequently that they extend their criticism of Christianity to other religions, to religion itself as such.

The paradox is only apparent. Nearly all the atheists I know acknowledge that the coming of Christianity represents a truly qualitative leap in the religious history of mankind. Many are well aware that it is thanks to the ferment of the Gospels that civilization has progressed and that men—and therefore they themselves—have become conscious of their dignity and their mission in the universe. Atheists of Moslem origin, for example, have often told me that if the peoples of Africa and Asia claim justice and dignity as rightfully theirs, it is due to the influence of Christianity. Marxists for their part do not refuse to recognize the role Christianity has played in the proletariat's becoming aware of its dignity and its mission.

Should not all men and all peoples, thirsting for justice and dignity, seeking the renewal of humanity and the universe, logically wish to become Christians? However, it is atheists they have become, or will in the future! I do not believe we have any right to accuse them of a "diabolical" refusal of the light. John XXIII, breaking with an ancient tradition, had the great merit of publicly acknowledging that "others" are far from being solely guilty of the rent in the seamless robe of Christ—first through the Eastern schism and then through the Protestant reform.

We believing Christians need the same honesty and courage in admitting our own responsibility for the thundering advance of atheism in a world in which for two thousand years the Gospel has been preached. It is because our individual and collective conduct as Christians has so seldom conformed to the evangelical spirit that peoples and individuals, awakened to their dignity by Christianity, believe they must declare themselves its enemy.

Naturally I know atheists (and believers as well) for whom there exists no need for an absolute, for anything that transcends their daily life. They are satisfied to live, for good or ill, in conformity with their environment. I do not know whether or not they comprise a majority. But it is undeniable that many unbelievers are not at all satisfied with this kind of existence. I realize that most determined atheists reject the term "transcendence" but only because in their minds the word evokes the concept of the supra-temporal or supra-human, while they wish to know only the temporal and the human.

But I do not speak here as a metaphysician. I place myself solely on the psychological terrain, on that of observable phenomena, and there it is obvious that many atheists behave in a way that is anything but materialistic or even "immanentist." I have already mentioned the admirable self-denial which so many unbelieving savants manifest in the service of a science from which they anticipate great benefits for humanity. But there are also others. Among our quite "ordinary" atheist brothers there exists a subordination of their

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whole lives to an end which is at least subjectively transcendent and which attains the intensity of a genuine mystique—although most of them disdainfully, and with mistrust, reject that term. For them it is understood that mystique can be nothing other than a condemnation of the human and the earthly. Actually all atheists in our time make more or less explicitly their own the famous slogan of Karl Marx: "To make of man the supreme being for man."

My grandfather and the other atheists of the 19th and early 20th centuries said "no" to Christianity in the name of truth. The traditional proofs of the existence of God did not seem to them to stand the test of rational criticism. The historicity of the Gospels, even that of the person of Jesus, seemed to them at least contestable and Christian dogmas rationally untenable. That is why Christian apologetics at that time rightly applied itself to the refutation of these arguments. Today, especially among the younger generation, there are few unbelievers who still take any interest in discussing the truth of Christianity.

Having myself been an atheist until I was twenty-seven, I can testify that neither I nor my comrades ever asked ourselves about the truth or falsity of Christianity. All that counts for most men today is its effectiveness. You can demonstrate to them rationally the truth and solid foundation of all Christian dogmas, but if Christianity does not appear in their eyes humanly effectual, rare would be those who would be tempted to become converts. Many more or less implicitly approve Lenin's saying: "If God did exist, that would be for us a lesser reason for combating Him"—to such an extent do they consider religion to be ineffectual.

This notion of effectiveness must, moreover, not be thought of in a too restricted sense. For the great majority to be sure, what counts above all, if not exclusively, is social effectiveness. The odds are that a Curé d'Ars would have little effect in one of the dechristianized districts of our large cities, just as people are so little impressed by the miracles of Lourdes and Fatima that they do not bother to argue about them.

On the other hand, the charitable activity of an Abbé Pierre and the conduct of the priest-workers have at least made Christianity "sympathetic" to many unbelievers. Let us admit that there is nothing scandalous in this. Are we not aware that in the earliest days of the Christian era it was less the preaching of a new doctrine than the spectacle of Christian charity that attracted the peoples' attention to the new religion?

The atheist elites are nevertheless quite disposed to acknowledge that religion can have a greater, more profound effectiveness, that it can be viewed as being the advancing of human existence as a whole. Let Christianity demonstrate, say these unbelievers, that it is capable of creating a superior humanity and we will want to believe in it. Precisely because the writings of Teilhard de Chardin seem to respond to this demand, they encounter so sympathetic a response even in circles most hostile to "sociological" Catholicism. In the same way the atheist elites have recognized an echo of their own noblest aspirations in the acts of John XXIII, particularly in *Pacem in Terris*.

However that may be, in the present phase of things it is up to believers not so much to convert the atheist as to understand him. To do that it will be necessary for us to go out from our own framework of thought, to place ourselves through the charity "that comprehends all things" within the mentality of non-believers.

Hunting With My Father in Maine: 1941

I remember the old, deserted estates,
half merged in the forest,
and their orchards overgrown by weeds.
The deer would come like dreams,
late in the evenings,
to feast on dented apples in the grass.

We would sit fifty yards apart,
half-hidden on the ragged shore of trees,
and let the darkness blow upon our faces
like the cold. With hard watching, brush
would grow antlers and the stumps would breathe.

Only the houses would refuse to burgeon
into the likeness of life; we were never fooled
into thinking the dark windows
were anything but emptiness. I thought:
"In the houses nothing is left but time."

But more than the apple trees transformed
their living, and in our patient quietude
we gathered up the sentience of plants
and time; my father's hands would vein
like leaves, and in his stare eternity.
spread like the cold breeze from the woods
that smelled of dark spruce and fir.

Thus even now I sometimes hear the whirr
of the spruce trees dragged against the wind,
see the silence happen in the orchards
where deer that can't be known or seen
feed at night and come and go
beyond our hearing.

My father lasts on simply in the time
he lived. The houses are still there.
Darkness is all; the trees still bloom
and grow their fruit—forgotten engines
of human hunger, old symbols of past time.

JACK MATTHEWS

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The Election—I

An Ethnic Backlash?

JAMES W. CAREY

SPECULATION on the source of the so-called white backlash has centered on ethnic minorities, primarily Irish, Italians and Poles. Gov. George Wallace ran up sizable vote totals in Lake County, Indiana, which houses the industrial cities of Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago. Large numbers of ethnic Catholics, particularly Poles and other East Europeans, live in these cities. In Wisconsin, Wallace ran well in Milwaukee's Polish and Italian precincts. In Maryland, Wallace received active and widespread support in Irish and Italian sections of Baltimore.

Yet one must not infer a "white backlash" from the Wallace primary vote. There is something fanciful about a presidental preference race pitting George Wallace against John Reynolds as in Wisconsin. A vote in such an election can be used irresponsibly, without any regard to the issues normally at stake in an election. A vote for Wallace in such a race could be a symbolic expression of many frustrations including, but not limited to, frustration with the Negro.

Data gathered this summer in more than two hundred interviews with ethnic Catholics in New England industrial cities convinced me there will be little or no white backlash among ethnic Catholics. There are no strong tendencies for normal Democrats to convert to Goldwater supporters on the basis of civil rights. The conclusion is corroborated by opinion polling data currently available to President Johnson.

In the President's polls all ethnic groups favor Johnson by heavy margins, usually around seventy per cent. The Catholic vote likewise favors Johnson by a three to one margin, running well ahead of Protestant support. Further, a recent Gallup poll revealed Johnson had the support of an extraordinary 91 percent of Catholic voters. This is well above the 78 per cent support the late President Kennedy received from Catholics. It indicates that the Catholic total in Johnson's column is being swelled by defections of middle-class Republican Catholics from Senator Goldwater.

The President's polls support my own findings that ethnic Catholics who are traditional Democrats are not being lured by racial animosity and racial prejudice into the Republican coalition. But while there will not be a politically significant white backlash among ethnic Catholics, one cannot infer an absence of prejudice or resentment. The Negro is an obsessive preoccupation of the ethnic Catholics with whom I spoke. The prejudice is real, the bitterness intense, the attitudes intractable.

Prejudice against the Negro is nothing new among ethnic groups. The first of the immigrants, the Irish, have a long history of racial animosity actively opposing the abolition of slavery in the mid-nineteenth century. Although the Irish formed a major portion of the Union Army in the Civil War, they were chagrined to discovered that a war originally declared to save the Union, a cause in which they had a special stake, ended by being fought to free the slaves, a freedom which they neither desired nor encouraged.

Irish opposition to abolition stemmed from the same fears and desires which today infect the relations of ethnic Catholics and Negroes. Contrary to Michael Novak's recent observation in the *New Republic*, the resistance of ethnic Catholics to the social changes which impel the Negro upward in society has nothing to do with the kinship of conservatism and Catholic philosophy. Their articulated resentment is on the gut issues of economics: jobs, money, and property values.

THE MAJOR fear working-class Catholics have is that the Negro either seeks, or will in the nature of the case receive, preferential treatment in the economic system. The fear is grounded in the realization that refusal to hire Negroes or attempts to fire incompetent Negroes will be increasingly met with the charge of racial discrimination. And in a nation legally if not emotionally opposed to job discrimination, the fear is that the organized power of the state will be used to enforce preferential treatment. The standard of the Urban League, that preferential treatment is socially necessary and morally proper to overcome two hundred years or more of deprivation, is simply not an argument salable to the ethnic worker. His resentment of the Negro is infused with the economics of survival and reflects the fear that he will be disadvantaged, ultimately, in competing with the Negro. The point is often made—without a clear understanding of ethnic history—that state power was never used preferentially for the Italians or Irish.

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Of course many of the workers with whom I spoke live in New England cities still blighted from the abrupt exit of the textile industry after World War II. As they are themselves only marginally participating in American prosperity, they view the increased competition for jobs which would stem from greater Negro emancipation with something less than enthusiasm.

Naturally there is a fear that the civil rights bill will lead to a diffusion of the colored population throughout the cities, prompting a deterioration in property values. This is a sentiment not at all restricted to ethnic peoples for, as Samuel Lubell has commented, fear for "property values may well be the strongest single source of white resistance in the North." And among ethnic groups with strong desires to acquire real property one naturally finds the most vivid citations of Negro misuse and destruction of property. Italian and Polish groups both invest heavily in real estate, both are given to emotional language and both emphasize the Negro threat to property value. The Irish by contrast are less attracted to purchasing real property and have less respect for its value. The Irish are more interested in income than assets and hence the direction of their protest is toward job discrimination. As job discrimination is a less inflammatory and a more improbable reality than shrinking property values, the Irish appear to possess a somewhat more conciliatory attitude on racial questions than do other ethnic groups.

But the articulated fear for depreciation in property values masks a more important threat which ethnic people sense from the Negro. No one can adequately understand relations between the Negro and ethnic Catholic without appreciating the fact that ethnic groups in the United States have always practiced cultural apartheid. They have attempted to gather themselves into homogenous cultural ghettos in the city, have shown an aversion to cultural pluralism, have resisted and resented the intrusion of any alien group. In part this has been reinforced by the Church because Catholic worship in ethnic neighborhoods is an extension of nationality as much as it is of religion. Similarly, local political institutions, as anyone who has visited an Irish or Italian political club knows, are extensions of the values, the norms, the culture of nationality. Italians and other ethnic groups want to be left, in the phrase of the day, "with their own kind," which means with other Italians and not with whites generally.

This desire for cultural apartheid is so strong today that it makes it virtually impossible for many ethnic Catholics to understand the Negro protest. They cannot quite understand why the Negro should want to move into alien neighborhoods, why the Negro should not prefer, in spite of housing conditions, to stay within the ghetto.

The attitudes of ethnic people do not promise any easy or quick amelioration of the racial problem. The only happy note is the relative absence of the ancient American sexual myth: fear of intermarriage. Except among a minority of ethnic women, racial discussions generally did not end on that familiar note, "Would you want your sister to marry one?" Indeed, it was among the middle classes, individuals living in suburbs Negroes will not invade for years, holding jobs secure from Negro competition, that one detects the fear of miscegenation. In fact, the major source of backlash, if it materializes, will come from the relatively secure middle classes economically and geographically separated from the mass of Negro humanity rather than from the more economically marginal and geographically juxtaposed ethnic groups.

There exists then a politically explosive reservoir of sentiment among ethnic Catholics that Senator Goldwater, should he desire, could attempt to exploit. And it is only on the question of race that Goldwater has any appeal to these voters. One of the frequent comments variously expressed by ethnic workers is that "Goldwater is right on one thing; we've got to keep the nigger down." Yet Goldwater will have difficulty exploiting this sentiment for there are issues and considerations which for the moment at least outweigh civil rights.

FIRST, there is the traditional loyalty of ethnic groups to the Democratic party. This sense of identity with the fortunes of the Democratic party is sufficiently strong among ethnic Catholics to withstand severe political contradictions.

Second, and most important in the minds of voters I interviewed was the perception of Goldwater as a militarist, a jingoist likely to lead the nation into a limited war if not an ultimate nuclear confrontation. Among these voters, and one suspects that it is true universally, any increase in international tension between now and the election is likely to benefit Johnson. The intensity of the ethnic voter's perception of Goldwater's irresponsibility and impulsiveness casts doubt on the wisdom of the Senator's decision to make foreign policy an issue in the election. Many middle-class Catholics are exhilarated by the Senator's strident anti-Communism, and many East European Catholics can still be reached with the pledge to "free the captive nations." But the mass of ethnic Catholics will not readily vote for a militarist foreign policy. The burdens of war, at least war in its traditional forms, fall heaviest on the lower classes with large families, relatively less education, and fewer resources. And the ethnic voter is aware of his special vulnerability in the event of war.

Third, ethnic Catholics are not predisposed to undo the welfare state. They fought much too hard for these advances to sacrifice them frivolously. Senator Goldwater's economic policy is pictured, in a comforting

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phrase, as "mainstream Republicanism," but this is a stream which the ethnic Catholic perceives as flowing against the interests of the working class. Senator Goldwater will not easily live down his remarks in New Hampshire concerning Social Security.

In the absence of exceptional Negro militancy or engineered racial violence, the white blacklash has likely reached its apogee. The Republicans, Senator Goldwater, and Negro violence have largely dominated the headlines throughout the summer. With student demonstrators and freedom workers returning to the classrooms and Democratic political machines in the cities oiling up after the convention, we now enter a period in which traditional loyalties to the Democratic party will be activated and voting intentions brought more securely in line with personal biography and social class position. Thus over the next weeks the support of the ethnic Catholic should emotionally solidify behind Johnson.

Such a conclusion should be reassuring to anyone fearful of a racial vote among ethnic Catholics. Yet the perceived intractability of anti-Negro sentiment does not speak well for the future. Out of these racial fears could emerge a new political coalition reflecting an unlikely but politically powerful assortment of bedfellows. For racial tensions, anxieties and animosities could tear the majority party apart and lead to a coalition between racists, segregationists, and more racially moderate ethnic Catholics. For these people desire a form of separatism, an existence free from the intrusion of other groups independent of racial character.

Lending an eerie and destructive quality to this mood is the surprising fact that Negroes do not have to be physically present or geographically proximate to bring out latent racial animosities. Providence, Rhode Island, is a case in point. For the last year, at least, the Negro has been an obsessive preoccupation of ethnic workers in this heavily Catholic city. The Negro is seen as ubiquitously present and socially threatening. Yet Rhode Island has a small—and by the standards of New York, Chicago, and Indianapolis an almost invisible—Negro population. Out of a population of 850,000 in Rhode Island there are but 20,000 non-whites, less than 2.5% of the population. In Providence, all non-whites comprise less than six percent of the population. In addition, the non-white population while not stagnant is growing very slowly. Between 1950 and 1960 the non-white population grew but .6 of one percent. Yet all ethnic Catholics to whom I spoke consistently estimated the Negro population and growth rates at much higher figures.

The final irony in the relations between Negroes and ethnic Catholics is the curious role of the late John F. Kennedy. For both the Negro and ethnic Catholic, Kennedy was a cultural hero. His death, while bringing a near universal grief, had a special poignancy for these two groups. Yet in death ethnic Catholics have separated President Kennedy from most of what he stood for politically. He has been, in a special sense, deified, removed from the scene of politics, made a free-floating Irish atom swimming in a mystical sea of holy water. To mention Kennedy as a champion of Negro equality is to bring remarks and glances of incredulity from the ethnic Catholic. And that political party over which Kennedy's successor presides, that coalition between Negroes and whites, Catholics and atheists, intellectuals and workers is being severely strained, as it has been since 1948, by the racial problem. The attitudes of ethnic Catholics do not presage a quick, easy, or happy solution to the problem.

The Election—II

A Labor Backlash?

THOMAS R. BROOKS

LABOR strategists were in the forefront of those welcoming the candidacy of Senator Goldwater, on the grounds that not much effort or money would then be required to keep President Johnson in office. But present outlays in time, money and manpower clearly indicate that labor is now taking Goldwater very seriously indeed. The AFL-CIO is spending more than $2 million, or more than three times what it spent in 1960, in getting workers to register to vote.

It isn't that labor leaders believe Goldwater will win. They read the polls too. But fear of what Goldwater and his backers may accomplish in the long run has emerged as a dominant note in union newspapers and union speeches. As AFL-CIO president George Meany cried out last month to the delegates at the Steelwork-

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ers' convention, "One of our major political parties has been captured lock, stock and barrel by the right-wing extremists who look upon Barry Goldwater as a hero."

Behind this cry is the further fear that far too many American workmen will be tempted by Goldwater's know-nothingism. "We're going to pay the penalty this year," a top union official glumly told me, "for all those years of non-political unionism." Segregationist literature and a virulent whispering campaign among factory workers have nibbled at the loyalties of union men. The whispered rumors have convinced a number of workers that the civil rights act undermines seniority and means that "Niggers are going to take your job." The riots this summer stirred up a latent hostility to Negroes among many working people. Labor's political analysts claim that this hostility to civil rights and the Negro is strongest in the South and among the unskilled, relatively uneducated workers in the North and West.

While union spokesmen officially tend to minimize the white backlash, the AFL-CIO, with commendable caution, has authorized the distribution of 3 million copies of a flyer, "Civil Rights: Fact vs. Fiction," designed to allay worker fears. The United Steelworkers, one of the unions most worried about the white backlash, has been running a series of civil rights seminars in Canton, Ohio; Gary, Indiana; Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (all alleged hotbeds of backlash sentiment), to explain the civil rights act and to drive home the point that whites on the job are not going to be displaced by Negroes.

Instead of ducking the civil rights issue, union leaders, much to their credit, have taken it head on. Although the fair employment practices section of the new civil rights law does not become mandatory until next July, AFL-CIO president Meany has declared, "We've got to use our influence as an organization to get voluntary compliance as rapidly as possible." State and city central bodies of the Federation have been instructed to speed up the formation of community-wide civil rights committees to desegregate schools, hotels, restaurants, parks, swimming pools and like facilities. Each of the 131 AFL-CIO international unions has been asked to assign a national officer to the development of a fair employment practices program within their respective unions. And, finally, the unions have done yeomen's work in getting minority group members registered to vote in the North and in the South.

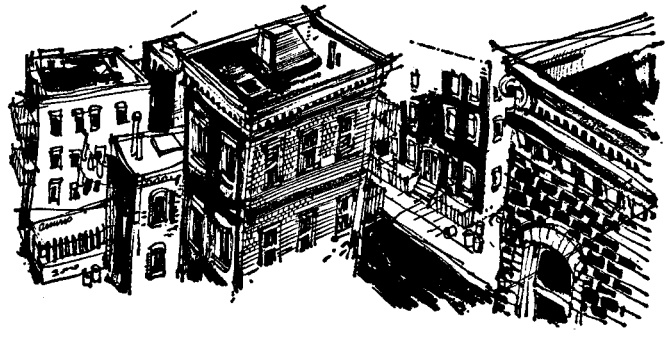
Undeniably, however, union leaders are counting on bread-and-butter issues to keep workers in the Johnson column. As AFL-CIO president Meany has noted, "We do have the feeling that our members can grasp the political realities and will react in a normal way if their economic interests and unions are jeopardized." After all, Goldwater is anti-union. And, history indicates that when unions are threatened, the rank-and-file rallies around.

Every time Goldwater knocks the war on poverty, TVA, medicare, social security, he loses worker votes. It is as simple as that. As Walter Lippmann noted ironically, in Barry Goldwater "we have a demagogue who dreams of arousing the rich against the poor." Unhappily, for Barry, our affluent society has not produced all that many rich. The blunt fact is that without the poor one cannot build a winning all-white party in America. And, for all the criticism of our "fat-cat" unions, the unions remain the one organized group in the country capable of mobilizing the poor politically. The unions might not be able to fend off a Huey Long type demagogue, combining racism with the pork-barrel, but Goldwater!

THE GOLDWATER candidacy has evoked the strongest political response from the unions in over two decades. The AFL-CIO executive council unanimously endorsed the Johnson-Humphrey ticket without a demur from its Republicans, Maurice Hutcheson of the Carpenters, James A. Suffridge of the Retail Clerks and Lee W. Minton of the Glass Bottle Blowers. (These men are not likely to return to the Republican Party either.) Unions that normally do not endorse a presidential ticket are falling over each other in the rush to get on the Johnson-Humphrey bandwagon. The Teamsters, a non-AFL-CIO union, seem to be the only major holdout in the rush to endorse Johnson.

AFL-CIO president Meany reports that it has been easier to secure volunteers for voter registration drives this year than in any other year in his memory. And union leaders say COPE collections are "running ahead" of what they were at this time in 1960. So much Barry Goldwater has done for the unions. He has united them politically. He has set them to work politically. Considering labor's resources and talents—and Goldwater's anti-union record—there's no serious reason for believing that union members will defect to Goldwater in any large number. The immediate problem the unions appear to have is that of complacency—that workers will stay at home on the theory that Johnson will win anyhow.

But some fear that unions will not be able to sustain the momentum past election day. "Labor is always kind of reacting to what is happening," notes one of its own



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political strategists, "and Goldwater is what is happening *now*." Another politico fears that all the current political excitement within labor "is just a flash in the pan." Once Goldwater goes, he told me, the unions will drop back into a comfortable apathy. But I'm not at all so sure. It could happen, but there are a good many younger people within the labor movement who are ready to capitalize on this year's political fever. Even Meany is in no mood to allow whatever strength labor accumulates during the campaign to dissipate. He is convinced—as are many other labor leaders—that labor's key struggles in the future will take place in Congress and in the state legislatures.

Significantly, while attention has been focused on the national contest, the unions also have been working very hard in the Congressional vineyards to elect candidates who are not only solidly behind the President's war on poverty but candidates who also stand as close to the unions as they do to the Administration, if not closer. "The possibility exists," says Alexander E. Barkan, AFL-CIO COPE director, "that enough additional liberals can be elected to break the strength of the [conservative] coalition [in the House] on key measures. In Senate contests, the unions are likely to play a key role in returning the by-and-large liberal "class of 1958." If re-elected, according to Barkan, this class will have accumulated the seniority necessary to attain committee leadership positions. It seems safe to say, anyhow, that labor is certain to exploit the possibilities opened up by a more liberal Congress. On such developments rest our hopes for keeping the next Johnson Administration left of center.

The Mystique Reaches Sweden

Suffragette Nuns

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

WHEN the Pope declared that women would attend the third session of the Council, not only nuns, but laywomen as well, the news attracted considerable attention in Scandinavia. It so happened that a battle was raging in Sweden at that very moment over the question of women pastors—a battle which has divided the nation's clergy into two irreconcilable camps and which has stirred the whole public into taking sides. Those opposed to women pastors have up to now watched the events in Rome with the greatest interest; those in favor have long considered themselves to be in the true Protestant tradition, as opposed to the reactionary Roman prejudice against women.

The admission of women to the Council has suddenly made it clear, not that women are going to be ordained priests or deacons, at least not in the near future, but that an enormous international army of women, the biggest of its kind in the world and strongly organized —an army made up of the members of women's orders plus all the lay women and members of the third orders who are active within the framework of the Catholic Church—is going to be represented at the Council, with a view to modernizing the Church and making it more efficient. It has become equally clear that this army of women has not only existed for a long time but has had its "generals" and its officers for centuries among the abbesses of the big and small orders, and that the great women saints among them have been great to a degree that makes most priests seem unimportant in comparison.

Some of these women saints—for instance, Saint Bridget of Sweden—have changed the course of history and have played such a part in the care of souls that the whole question of whether women should be pastors or not appears pointless. Somebody has suggested that if Sweden had remained Catholic, Swedish women would probably have had much more influence on religious life than they have today, by following the line which was opened up so early and forcefully by Saint Bridget. Even so, it has dawned upon many observers that women have traditionally had much more room within the Catholic Church than within the Protestant world, at least the Lutheran part of it. If this army of women has for the last four centuries been somewhat handicapped by "the Counter-Reformation complex," and hampered by a too heavy emphasis on tradition, what would happen if all this female energy and intelligence were to be reorganized, used rationally and released in the modern world?

ALL THIS has coincided with still another controversy sparked in Sweden by Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, which deplores a tendency among American women to ignore the opportunities opened to them

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by their grandmothers, and to settle instead for cooking, child-rearing and, above all, "sexual fulfillment."

It seems that the situation in Sweden is much the same. The number of women practicing a profession in competition with men is steadily decreasing; most young women are woefully uninterested in the spectacular opportunities given to them by the welfare state to study and to find good jobs. Like their American sisters, they are mainly interested in the so-called "engagement courses" at college, and if these do not result immediately in marriage they are willing to take inferior temporary jobs in places where the opportunities to find a husband are similar.

One intelligent and cultured woman belonging to the generation of the fighting grandmothers made the following sad comment: "We did not foresee one fact of capital importance, a fact which has overthrown all our plans for a better future for women, i.e., the disappearance of servants, which compels practically every married woman to be a servant herself at the same time that she is a wife and mother. A woman who insists on adding an outside job to this load becomes a sort of 'Stakhanovite' or shock worker and will in the end do both jobs badly: she will be a bad housewife, wife and mother and her profession will suffer. Is not the decay of the family, which is so clearly noticeable in Scandinavia, precisely due to the simple fact that to be a housewife, wife and mother *is* a full-time job?"

Another intelligent and cultured woman, again belonging to the generation of the fighting grandmothers, noted this fact: although many married women realize increasingly that to be a housewife is a full-time job, and that to help their husbands in *their* jobs frequently is more than they can carry, they do so nevertheless. Their conclusion is that the present trend is unavoidable. As most women marry, it is useless for them to learn a profession, as the job of housewife is a full-time one. Only a few commentators agreed with Betty Friedan that a woman with an outside job is happier and better balanced than a woman who is exclusively a housewife, and that a career-woman develops a capacity to finish her domestic work quicker than a full-time housewife, who too often falls victim to Parkinson's Law, which states that any job, however light, expands to occupy all the time available for it.

In the meantime, a Swedish writer who had been touring a series of underdeveloped countries, visiting advisers and businessmen from his own and other countries with a high standard of living, made an interesting discovery. He had watched with particular interest the behavior of the wives of these men. As there are plenty of servants in most underdeveloped countries, these wives were suddenly relieved of their heaviest burden. How did they react? Did they seize the opportunity to read or write, or to devote themselves to some hobby which they had always dreamt of? To his surprise, most of them did nothing at all, or rather they sank into a lazy life of futile partying and endless gossip at the hairdressers, a life dominated by clothes and entertainment.

With a few noticeable exceptions such women came more and more to resemble the rich native women, who observed them and presumably came to the conclusion that all the talk about the necessary emancipation of the women in the underdeveloped countries was just theory and not practice. Since it is precisely the apparently chronic backwardness of the women in the underdeveloped countries that makes underdevelopment so hard to eliminate, we have the makings of a vicious circle. At any event, the wives of the advisers in the underdeveloped countries turned out to be poor propagandists for emancipation.

HERE, strange to say, the nuns come into the picture. In many underdeveloped countries they have been the most efficient propagandists for the emancipation of women. Take for instance Algeria, where the White Sisters and not the lazy and spoiled wives of the one-time French settlers have educated generation after generation of Algerian girls, making cultured, refined women out of them, women who are conscious of their rights as human beings and who are fighters against the traditionally humiliating conditions of women. In other Moslem countries—those in the Middle East for instance—Catholic nuns have brought up generation after generation of girls, who remain Moslems, but who are (to take one example) less and less inclined to permit polygamy.

Recently I had a talk about these problems with a Swedish girl of twenty. She admitted readily that she and most of the girls she knew were less and less interested in learning a profession or even in merely profiting from all the economical and technical facilities for self-improvement that the welfare state offers them. As most of us marry, she went on, we do not need all this and most of us are too lazy to make any unnecessary effort. Besides, if you don't fight to get a boy, you won't get one. Men are less and less inclined to marry, and therefore the competition among us women has become increasingly brutal. All this keeps you busy and leaves you less and less time for studies worthy of the name and not just make-believe studies.

Another woman belonging to the generation of the fighting grandmothers told me: "It is all most depressing. If we look back, not many of our dreams have become realities. The only thing the girls of today care for, a thing that they *think* we fought for, is a complete sexual anarchy, a sexual chaos, without any norms whatever. The rest does not interest them, even if they are intelligent, and there are plenty of girls around with the highest IQ. Granted that most girls marry—and undoubtedly we underestimated the impact the disap-

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pearance of the servants would have—this still should not keep them from taking the opportunities offered to them before they marry, opportunities to use this intelligence and to become cultured at least to the level of their husbands and their growing children.

"Our victory, in short," she went on, "has not brought the fruits we expected. Even our last conquest, women as pastors, does not change things very much, since it only concerns a few individuals. Indeed, the importance of women is decreasing everywhere—with possibly one exception, the vast army of women within the Catholic Church. They are not, like so many of their sisters in the world, obsessed by the myth of 'sexual fulfillment.' We thought once that they were the precise symbol of the backwardness of women; but to our amazement we see them now as among the stoutest and most efficient pioneers for the emancipation of woman in countries where women really are still like animals. This army of women is unique. If it is modernized and given a rationale, it may well be one day that precisely this army will carry forward the best of what we hoped for and dreamt of."

Competent But Uninspired Films

Venice Observed

RONALD STEEL

THIS YEAR'S Venice film festival—held once again on the sun-baked flats of the Lido during the late August-early September doldrums—was an austere and rather puritanical affair. The official title—the 25th International Exhibit of Cinematographic Art—was taken in dead seriousness, and the emphasis was clearly on Art. The primadonnas of the movie world seemed to have their visas lifted, or at least they stayed away from the Lido in such numbers that the *papparazzi* began photographing the critics in sheer desperation. Instead of starlets in gold-lamé bikinis, the Lido appeared to be populated entirely by film scholars in earnest debate over the State of the Cinema.

This state of affairs made for a fairly stern, no monkey-business festival, perfectly in keeping with the line laid down by the festival's new director, Dr. Luigi lowed, in making our choices, a standard of judgment Chiarini, who decreed at the opening: "We have fol- even more serious than in the past. It is very important to point out those works that are outstanding in a world of superficiality and commercial conventionalism."

While admiring Dr. Chiarini's non-commercialism, there were times when one wished he had been a little less serious and a little more imaginative. In this spirit of Calvinistic rigor, he allowed only twelve major films to be shown in competition, as against nineteen last year, and while those exhibited were intellectually honest and technically professional, they tended to creak a good deal with the weight of the past and exude a stale air of academicism.

Among the most earnest, and surely the most beautiful in terms of color and image, was the eagerly-awaited new work by Michelangelo Antonioni and his first in color—"The Red Desert." Without any serious competition, it walked off with the Golden Lion for the best film of the festival, although perhaps more in recognition of his three earlier masterpieces—"l'Avventura," "The Night," and "The Eclipse"—than solely for its own merits. Here Antonioni continues the study of alienation in contemporary society he explored so masterfully in that trilogy. But the tendency toward a private language of abstraction that crept up in "The Eclipse" and diminished its impact by making its heroine seem neurotic for no specific reason, here becomes even more pronounced as the neurosis turns into a psychosis which is neither explained nor adequately related to the surroundings in which it occurs. While we have come to expect intelligence and a coruscating honesty from Antonioni, "The Red Desert" fails to be convincing because we are not presented with a person operating within a normal range of human behavior, but a psychotic personality. Thus the identification of the spectator with the protagonist, which is absolutely crucial to Antonioni's art, is almost entirely lacking. We feel sorry for the pitiful Giuliana in her desperate attempts to establish some kind of contact with a world she finds unbearably hostile, but we cannot really understand the source of her torment since it appears rooted in an anxiety so personal that it cannot be communicated. It is as though the neurotic Anna, who disappears so early in "l'Avventura," had made a mysterious and not particularly welcome return.

RONALD STEEL is a frequent contributor and the author of the recently published *The End of Alliance* (Viking).

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Part of this disparity seems to lie in Antonioni's own ambiguity over the industrial society which at once seems to fascinate and horrify him. Shot in the sand flats of the Adriatic, where a new petrochemical industry has transformed sleepy Ravenna into Italy's second port, the film captures the disturbing surrealism of a landscape where sulfurous smoke belches against a sickly green sky, where brown fluids ooze from the violated earth, and deafening noises blot out human voices. This is the world the heroine rebels against, but her rebellion is so inarticulate, her self-knowledge so limited, her will so atrophied, that she can neither frame her discontent nor understand it. More noble, perhaps, more sensitive than the husband and the lover who do not understand her anguish, she is not really much more than a case history whose plight fails to shock us into seeing ourselves in her fate.

Impressive and obviously deeply-felt, "The Red Desert" is defeated by an emotional aridity that defeats its own high aspirations. The technicolor, it should be added, is used with such intelligence and subtlety that it deserves an essay in itself. For the first time it is not simply decorative, but the very language of the film, expanding and commenting upon the action and absolutely crucial to its emotional development. It is an astonishing breakthrough in the use of color, even exceeding Antonioni's own artistry with black and white.

A DISQUIETING variation on the theme of alienation appeared in the French film "Life Upside Down," written, produced and directed by young Alain Jessua, a former assistant to Ophuls and Becker. It is an account of an ordinary man who finds increasing pleasure in solitude. Eventually he manages to drive away his wife and mother, and cut himself off from the world until he reaches total happiness sitting alone on the floor of an empty room tenderly picking at a grape. Since no society will permit such a rebellion—even if it is only an internal one—the anti-social young man is declared insane and hustled off to an institution.

In sketch this sounds like a theme from Beckett by way of Ionesco, but it is handled absolutely straight and done with such intelligence and honesty that it nearly succeeds in convincing that isolation may be the only hope of escape from a society whose premises are often madder than its victims. The jury seemed to think so, too, and awarded Alain Jessua the prize for the best first film by a new director.

His countryman, Jean-Luc Godard, whose "Breathless" of a few years back has made him the hero of the dispossesed existentialists, was represented by an alternatingly fascinating and exasperating account of marital infidelity which he entitled, with obviously deliberate humor, "The Married Woman." A moralist masquerading as a libertine, Godard concocts the mixture pretty much as it has been before: afternoon coupling to the strains of Vivaldi, aimless trips in open convertibles, appointments under movie marquees, characters interminably wandering around apartments in their underwear, and the inevitable lecture delivered by an itinerant philosopher who wanders in for the purpose of instructing his juniors in the wisdom of Pascal and Camus.

Although at least two-thirds of this film seems to be conducted in bed with shots of hands massaging the human anatomy, the effect is so anti-erotic as to be clinical. After five minutes one begins to feel like a medical student at a lecture. Which is perhaps the effect Godard wanted, for the antiseptic sex is quite in key with the arid, and indeed mindless, personality of the protagonist, who is unable to decide whether to leave her husband for her lover, and whose problems are so trivial as to hardly be worth the effort of thinking about her. Happily, however, there are moments when Godard's virtuosity triumphs over a silly script, bringing flashes of insight and intelligence that makes one realize he is capable of doing something impressive if he ever manages to shake off his *Cahiers du Cinema* self-indulgence.

That other iconoclast of the cinema, the Marxist poet-novelist-director Pier Paolo Pasolini, astounded everyone by turning away from the loving examinations of Rome's sotto-proletariat that dominated "Accatone" and "Mamma Roma" to, of all unlikely places, the Holy Bible. The title alone is enough to shock those familiar with his earlier work, yet "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" turned out to be a straightforward narrative film without tricks and without irony, shot against convincing natural backgrounds in southern Italy with an impressive cast of non-professional actors. The result is a film of great simplicity and earnestness in welcome contrast to the garish technicolor melodramas churned out by the Hollywood producers with such depressing and such sacrilegious regularity.

Here is the Bible stripped of sickly romanticism and saccharine sentimentality; here is the Gospel, harsh, uncompromising and demanding. Here is the Christ Who comes bearing the Sword and preaching revolution; an unsmiling and remote Savior who threatens authority and frightens the simple shepherds and fishermen. This is a film without pyrotechnics, without romance, without gladiators and, *mirabile dictu,* a biblical film without sex. The dance of Salome is a model of simplicity, as is the walking on water and the miracle of the loaves and fishes, while the Sermon on the Mount consists of a series of close-ups of Christ's face as the words are shouted into the camera. Pasolini's "Gospel" is an impressive achievement which deserves the widest distribution and which certainly

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merited the special jury prize and the Catholic critics' prize, which it won.

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING section of the festival was pretty much of a disappointment all the way around. Joseph Losey's "King and Country" was a pedestrian, if well-meaning, job in comparison to his last film, "The Servant," which was one of the high points of last year's New York film festival. Presumably made to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the first World War, it is a pacifist drama which manages to say nothing much except that war is hell and officers are bastards, which is true, but hardly breathtaking news.

A simple-minded soldier deserts from the British army after three years in the trenches, is caught and hauled before a court-martial which sentences him to death *pour encourager les autres*. Too trusting to seize upon the hints of pacifism and shell-shock thrown to him by the defense counsel, he refuses to believe that he will be shot for such a simple and natural act of self-preservation. But the war-machine has its way, the simple soldier is pumped full of morphine and shot through the head, and the institutionalized murder of trench warfare drags on. It is a theme worth repeating, but Losey brings nothing new to it, and despite superb performances by Tom Courtenay, which won him the best actor award, and by Dirk Bogarde, this film rarely rises above the level of television drama.

Although I missed the other British entry, "The Girl With Green Eyes," about a young Irish lass who loses her virtue to an unscrupulous Older Man, my colleagues found it true to the novel by Edna O'Brien, although otherwise unremarkable. The American side of the cupboard was even barer once Robert Rossen's "Lilith" was snatched from competition, leaving only young Michael Roemer's "Nothing But a Man," an honest and heartfelt, but artistically deficient, attempt to deal with the effects of racial prejudice upon a Southern Negro.

Among the other films in competition which won no prizes were: "The Peach Thief," a Bulgarian drama about an ill-fated love affair during the First World War between a prisoner of war and a discontented wife; Jean Delannoy's version of "Special Friendships," taken from the novel by Alain Peyrefitte of an unfortunate romance in a boys' school; a tedious Swedish comedy called "Loving," whose only virtue was a delightful performance by Harriet Anderson for which she took the best actress award; and a heavy-handed version of "Tonio Kroeger," from the autobiographical novel by Thomas Mann, which director Rolf Theile managed to burden with the same academicism that marred his earlier film "Rosemary." Wisely shown outside of competition was Ingmar Bergman's "Speaking Of All These Women," his latest effort and his first one in color—an embarrassing film for which almost no one could summon a decent word.

This year the Russians put all their hopes on a wide-screen production of "Hamlet" that was eight years in the making, which, as Mary McCarthy once remarked of Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, was six years too long. Although it won a special jury prize, it seemed to be given more for good intention than for actual merit, for this is a very strange Hamlet indeed —heroic, anti-contemplative, resolute—the antithesis of everything that Laurence Olivier and Freud told us Hamlet is all about. This Soviet Hamlet is all fire and ice who doesn't seem to have a single doubt in his head. He *is* the energetic New Man struggling against a corrupt society, brimming over with energy to overturn the feudal world of the Danish court. His true ally, and indeed alter-ego, is Fortinbras, who at the end becomes the hero carrying on dead Hamlet's good work for him.

While it is perfectly proper to do a political Hamlet—the profoundity of Shakespeare is that he can be reinterpreted by every generation and by every society in terms of its own problems—an English-speaking viewer cannot help but feel deprived at witnessing a Hamlet from which all the poetry has disappeared and in which little remains but court intrigue and interminable shots of waves breaking against castle walls. Give us a political Hamlet, by all means, but not an updating of "Ivan the Terrible" disguised as Shakespeare.

Aside from the films in competition, the festival directors happily held a showing of the prize-winners from some of the other European festivals this year, plus a few distinguished films not yet in general release, which included: Andrzey Munk's remarkable "Passenger," a work of enormous power that intensifies the tragedy of his early death; a superlative Czech film by Milos Forman called "Ace of Spades" which has no plot at all as it recounts the minor tribulations of a 16-year-old who tries to learn the twist, win a girl and keep his job in a grocery store, yet which is full of dazzling vitality and humor; Jonas Mekas' grim version of "The Brig" in which a Marine Corps prison becomes the scene of a Kafkaesque assault upon the human personality; and Luis Bunuel's "Diary of a Chambermaid," his latest, and perhaps his greatest, film, starring Jeanne Moreau in a compelling study of corruption and incipient fascism in the France of the 1930s that left its audience stunned in admiration and in horror.

These fringe films added some desperately-needed luster to a festival dominated by competent and obviously sincere works which showed relatively little innovation or daring. But if they spoke in a small voice, it was at least a steady one, and they had nothing to be ashamed of.

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THE STAGE

A Zero and a Cipher

THE DISCOURAGING thing about trying to review musicals is that no one has ever proved (so far as I know) that it can be done at all. Trouble is, if you dissect the things too carefully, you are likely to sound like a mad professor analyzing the nature of laughter (there you are, chaffering over your Aristotle and your Bentley, while everyone else is simply having a good time). On the other hand, if you give in to the mob hysteria, and to D. H. Lawrence's dark gods of the blood, you won't sound like a critic at all, but like a huckster for a revivalist meeting. ("Whale of a show, tunefullaughriotromp"—epithets that only need the adman's exclamation marks to burst into hysterical flame.)

The best solution may be to let the euphoric parts go with a brief though ardent salute, and to concentrate on the damp bits in between. So long as the tent is rocking, there is no point fussing over details; only when something goes wrong need the dramatic canons boom. In "Fiddler on the Roof," for instance, one might be tempted to mention that some of the Russian folk dancing looks an awful lot like the kind of thing they do on the West Side, and in the court of the Siamese King. But this is one up for the mad professor. The dances are exhilarating and probably just Russian enough. And the tunes they go with are quite memorable if you remember tunes easily.

On the other hand, some of the attempts to establish an atmosphere of Yiddish quaintness in "Fiddler" are pushy and over-exposed and fair game for straight criticism. There is too much formula here; the village of Anatevka unburdens itself of more wry resignation in half an hour than you'd expect to hear in a year. (A law against wry resignation we should have yet.) And Yiddish wit has set itself higher standards than Joseph Stein the librettist seems able to reach consistently. The result at times is roughly equivalent to an overdose of stage-Irish or ou la la French.

Then again, there is a fairly complicated attempt at straight drama, which takes a lot of time and yet not enough time to work. We are faced with several subplots, set at varying emotional temperatures, the total effect of which is too skimpy for drama and too elaborate for musical. Between acts, there is no one problem you especially want to see resolved: you just want to catch some more of that dancing, with the beards and the short silk over-coats.

In point of fact the dancing pretty much grinds to a halt in the second act, but the play proper becomes considerably more interesting. This is mainly due to an extraordinary performance by Zero Mostel, an actor of weight, in every sense, and of excruciating delicacy. Mostel is an epic. When he suffers everyone suffers. When he changes his mind, a whole era ends. And when he is evicted by the Tsar's troops at the end of the play, we don't have to see the other villagers being evicted too. They are all there in the slumped shoulders and goggle eyes of the great Mostel. Zero stands for infinity.

Mostel gathers all the strings, all the scraps of folktale, and lurches off with them. The ending would be sentimental, except that Mostel is beyond sentiment, just as he is beyond conventional humor: he responds to joy and pain with some richer emotion all his own. If this be revivalism, make the most of it. Faced with Mostel, the mad professor can only tear up his notes, and join the snake-dance. This performance lifts a ragged over-long play into the empyrion. (*Imperial Theater*)

"ABSENCE of a Cello" accords itself some of the indulgences that we begrudgingly grant to musicals and gets away with some of them. It sacrifices practically everything for laughs—like a man burning his furniture, and finally the house itself, to keep warm. After the first twenty minutes or so your head aches from wisecracks—and still they come, some good, some not so good, each devaluing the others in a badly flooded market.

The theme deserves, if not a better fate, possibly a calmer one. It seems to be Ira Wallach's premise that all our team-spirit, organization-man talk is designed for the benefit of the drudges at the bottom of the ladder. Besides keeping them brainlessly loyal, it serves to identify them on sight: in feeding it hopefully back to

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Subjective Seasons

In romper-days he built the world
  from blocks of easy reach;
No problems here slept overnight,
While shoots burst green in quick delight
  he met with steps and speech.

Each classroom raised his vantage point,
  a world grew with his grade;
But though new windows spanned his wall
To show the oaks were climbing tall,
The sun, the air, the vivid call,
  were strained, conditioned, ready-made

The falling leaves revealed his landscape
  but blew both blind and free.

Now barren trees stand skinned in white,
His wrinkled trunk scarred from the fight,
Through frosted panes to rocking sight
He gulps his last distorted light—
  contacts Reality.

BROTHER T. KRETZ S.J.

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their masters, they define themselves with horrible precision.

"Absence of a Cello" is all about an eccentric mathematician (Fred Clark) who decks himself out as a square in order to get a job with a big corporation. He removes his cello (hence the title) but retains his beard, which would certainly be enough to give him away: in addition to which, Clark and his family parody squareness much too broadly to fool anyone. (The switcheroo is so obvious that I won't apologize for giving it away: the corporation doesn't *want* square mathematicians.)

There is no law that says a comedy has to be probable. But if it sacrifices both probability and surprise, as this one does, a heavy strain is put on the gags; and these do wear a bit thin at times. Maybe a dash of music would help. In any event, "Absence," or should it be "Cello," is an amusing play (although for some curious reason it kept whispering "movie" to me) which will grab you or not in exact proportion to your own humorous stamina. Fred Clark and his incredible mother (Ruth White) should keep you going for a while; and Perry Littlewood has his moments as the kind of young man whose mouth never closes properly. (*Ambassador Theater*)

WILFRID SHEED

THE SCREEN

Johnny's So Long at the Fair

NOW that newspaper and magazine reviewers have recovered from seeing so many movies at the Second New York Film Festival, they can settle down to attending regular studio previews and writing their daily or weekly columns. No doubt any critic who saw all 26 of the films offered by the Festival during its 13-day run (and who kept up with his normal routine) would wind up with eye strain. The Festival was extremely well run this year; it cannot be held responsible for its unruly audiences who boo or applaud as the spirit moves them.

I attended several of the night programs and many of the day previews and saw 17 of the 26 films, mostly the touted ones and enough to get some impression of the whole show. I soon discovered, as I did at the Festival last year, that all is not gold that glitters at a film festival. Along with the golden few, there are more films that are just gilt. The N.Y. Festival succeeded in its aims: to display the work of new talent and to show what already-established directors were up to. While I don't agree with the reviewers who insist that only good movies should be shown at a festival, I am aware that a program of this sort always depends on what's available. Most Hollywood studios, more interested in money than prestige, take a dim view of festivals. And very often, foreign film-makers, for one reason or the other, refuse to submit their latest products. Ostentatiously missing from this festival were the new works by Ford, Bergman and Antonioni.

Most disappointing of the films I saw was "Diary of a Chambermaid," which was surprisingly dull and routine considering that it was made by Luis Bunuel whose 1930 "L'Age d'Or," never shown publicly here before until this Festival, proved as irreligious and anti-social as expected but much more out-dated than expected. Of all the nations represented at the Festival, Japan came out best with four films that are outstanding: the extraordinarily beautiful "The Taira Clan"; a provocative allegory on the human comedy, "Woman in the Dunes"; a delightfully youthful, humorous, and exciting saga about a young man's determination, "Alone on the Pacific"; and a fascinating commentary on modern civilization as seen through the eyes of an inexperienced young housewife, "She and He." I shall review the Festival films more completely as they are released in this country—and more than half of them will be and deserve to be shown here, not because they are necessarily good, but because most of them reflect with some artistry our times and man's condition today.

OF THE four American films shown at the Festival, I reviewed "Fail Safe" last week. And this week comes "Lilith." Some reviewers said that neither of these movies was really festival material. Well, if the well-made "Fail Safe," with its consideration of today's most pressing topic, nuclear war and world annihilation, isn't fit subject for a gathering of serious-minded film buffs, what is? "Lilith," which is not as good a film as "Fail Safe," is probably more typical festival stuff. It takes place in a mental sanitarium, has a great deal to do with sex, and has some stunning photography of the kind that vacillates between realism and the fanciful to indicate the mental state of its characters. It is interesting, although not significant however, that "Lilith" got into a jam at the recent Venice Film Festival where the festival committee was not receptive toward the film; so producer-director Robert Rossen withdrew it in a huff—for which I don't blame him. The row is not likely to make Hollywood studios feel any more kindly about festivals and the kind of politicking that goes on at them. Perhaps one of the great assets of the N.Y. Festival is that no awards are given out. The movies are just shown—for the audiences to take or leave.

In any case, "Lilith" is an interesting picture. Rossen gathered a good cast for it, and his production is handsome throughout, particularly for the attractive Long Island estate that was used as the setting for the institution. Considering, however, that this is a rather elegant sanitarium that costs $1,000 a month, it would seem that it should be better run. The screenplay, written by Rossen from J. R. Salamanca's novel, has loopholes that are more than a little disturbing. The story con-

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cerns a young man who gets a job at this place as an occupational therapist. But it soon becomes obvious to the viewer when this young man falls in love with one of the patients who is a schizophrenic nymphomaniac that he would do better as a patient here than as a member of the staff. The therapist's love is Lilith, a bewitching and very busy young woman who is having a lesbian affair with another patient (Anne Meacham) and drives still another patient (Peter Fonda) to suicide. What is this place—a country club or an asylum?

Jean Seberg, whose acting improves with every picture, gives Lilith a mad, haunting beauty and plays the role with great conviction. Unfortunately Warren Beatty, as the young therapist, walks through this difficult role in a half-angry-half-asleep manner. One is seldom able to follow the pattern that motivates his behavior. Perhaps this is the trouble with films about psychotics. When do we believe them and when do we take their story seriously? Are we and they all together in the cabinet of Dr. Caligari? "Lilith" is by no means dull. But it does make us wonder if the film, like its characters, is all there. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

CORRESPONDENCE

"Managing the News"

Rome, Italy

TO THE EDITORS: I regret to say that John Leo's "News and Views" of September 25, in which he comments on the U.S. Bishops' Press Panel, indicates that he was misinformed on a number of issues.

The column lists me as saying that all I want on the panel is a balance between 'liberals' and 'conservatives.' I did not and could not have made such a statement, because the composition of the press panel is not within my competence. This is decided each year by the episcopal chairman for the panel after discussions with various people.

The column also states that the status of Father George H. Tavard "at this writing (September 25 issue), is in doubt." The fact is that Father Tavard was invited to serve on the panel in mid-August and immediately accepted. Consequently his status with the panel could have been in doubt only in the mind of the uninformed.

The column also lists me as talking about "keeping out unauthorized personnel," and in the following sentence says that reporters were not consulted on the panel changes.

The ground rules distributed to newsmen on September 14 state that the panel sessions will "be limited to the working press, with the consequent exclusion of seminarians, guests and spectators." But it explains in the same sentence that the reason for this is limitation of space. This restriction was put into the ground rules at the earnest entreaty of many reporters who were unable to find a seat at the crowded meetings last year.

ELMER VON FELDT
Press Panel Director

Reply

THE QUESTION of interest here is why men of the stature of Fathers Häring, Higgins and Sheerin were tossed off the press panel. About this Mr. Von Feldt has nothing to say. He prefers to be engrossed by the mild suggestion that he helped perpetrate the coup for Archbishop McGucken, which he did.

My information was that Father Tavard was thinking of not returning. Perhaps it was wrong. At any rate, someone who put together a panel in such a way that even the reporters did not know who was on it until after the Council opened is in a doubtful position to chastise anyone for being misinformed about it.

There is no space to discuss Mr. Von Feldt's classic rules for the press, except to say that they are offensive, reactionary and in the same spirit as the purge of the three panel members. JOHN LEO

"Entering the Mainstream"

Rockaway Park, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: As one of the large—and I hope hope growing—group of non-Catholic readers of THE COMMONWEAL, I find each issue of the journal filling me with a renewed sense of gratitude and admiration for its unique quality—the blending of wholehearted commitment to a tradition with thorough-going intellectual integrity and deep moral sensitivity. The discussion of Catholic intellectualism in the issue of October 2nd is only one case in point out of many.

I should like to comment on one observation in Father Greeley's "Entering the Mainstream," which may seem tangential to your principal concern. Nonetheless, I believe it may be of some interest in its own right. In discussing the comparative intellectual distinction of Catholics and Jews in America, Father Greeley seeks to explain the alleged intellectual eminence of American Jews in socio-economic terms: "For a thousand years or more, the Jews had been either city-dwellers or commercial men; they had to live by their wit and intelligence in economic striving or they would not live at all."

I would not wish to deny the bearing of social, economic and political factors upon the Jewish mentality. But, it is clear that Father Greeley has overlooked another and even more fundamental cause for the comparatively high degree of Jewish intellectualism. I refer to the millenial Jewish tradition which regards the study of Torah, the whole body of religious, ethical and

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legal literature, as the direct personal obligation of every Jew, whatever his economic status or his intellectual capacity. The Jewish tradition always regarded the study of Torah as a mode of worship of God second to none.

As a result, the traditional Jewish community in central and eastern Europe during the past three centuries was honeycombed with *Hevrot,* or study groups, which ran the entire gamut from societies for the chanting of the Psalms, to the study of the Torah of Moses, the Commentary of Rashi, the Mishnah, the Talmud and its supercommentaries.

The authority of the Rabbi lay entirely in his character and the degree of his learning; he made no claim to sacerdotal status. The saintly Rabbi Abraham I. Kook, first Chief Rabbi of Israel, whose mystical fervor was matched only by his great learning, issued, in at least one case I know, a rabbinical ordination which read roughly as follows, "So-and-so is permitted to exercise the functions of a Rabbi in any community where there is no greater scholar than he." This respect for learning and the intellectual life had important socio-biological consequences for the Jewish community.

The Rabbis of the Mishnaic period (before the Third Century) had taught, "A man should sell all his possessions in order to marry the daughter of a scholar, so that if he dies or goes into exile, he may be certain that his children will be scholars" (*Pesahim* 49a). Undoubtedly, this ideal was never translated fully into reality, but there was a striking approximation in a recent period of Jewish history.

After the devastation of the Thirty Years War (1618-48) and the Chmielnicki massacres (1648-49) the Central-East European Jewish community, which arose in Germany and Poland, became a vast laboratory for a eugenic experiment that has not yet been fully evaluated. For nearly three centuries, until the outbreak of World War I, these communities made the study of Torah, the reverence for learning, and the high position of the scholar, central in their scale of values. In the most literal sense of the term, each Jewish father sought to give his sons as intensive an education as possible, and to marry his daughters to students. As a result, Eastern Europe was dotted with Yeshivot, or academies of learning. The smallest hamlets boasted of schools where young men as well as mature adults spent virtually their entire waking existence in study. Given three centuries of breeding for intelligence, one can understand the propensity to intellectualism which has characterized modern Jewry, even after the power of the tradition was weakened substantially in the Western World.

That this emphasis of the Jewish tradition, rather than the urban character of Jewish life, is to be credited with this Jewish trait, can be demonstrated on the negative side as well. In the United States today, most Jews are city-dwellers and engaged in business. Yet studies of the level of achievement of Jewish college students in the United States demonstrates that as Jews assimilate—or to use that blessed word "acculturate"—to the mores of American society, their alleged distinction in this area tends to disappear.

Research studies indicate that the outstanding distinction of Jewish college students, who were themselves immigrants, was largely maintained by the first generation of native-born American Jews. By the time the second and third generation of American Jews come to college, their preoccupation, or obsession, with the life of the spirit, has been largely dissipated and their intellectual achievement is no higher than that of their non-Jewish fellow Americans. If the intellectual level of American Catholics continues to improve, and the progressive alienation of American Jews from their tradition is not halted or reversed, the day may come much sooner than Father Greeley anticipates, when, to quote his prophecy, "The church-going Catholic will be as common in the upper reaches of Academia as the agnostic Jew." At present, the Lord knows, there is room and to spare in every group of the American people for an intellectual rebirth that will unite genuine commitment with genuine freedom of the spirit.

ROBERT GORDIS
Professor of Bible
The Jewish Theological Seminary of America

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An Approach to the Problem of Birth Control

Contraception and Catholics: A New Appraisal. By Louis Dupré. Helicon. $1.95.

by Robert T. Francoeur

WHEN Professor Dupré's pioneer article "Toward a re-examination of the Catholic position on birth control" appeared in *Cross Currents* (Winter 1964), his choice of title promised a more complete study in the future. His essay on Augustine's theology of marriage and sex in the special issue of THE COMMONWEAL on responsible parenthood this past spring (June 5) only added to our expectation.

When *Contraception and Catholics* appeared, a thin 94-page opus, one might have expected, as so often happens with previously published material, a blending, perhaps a bit strained, of the two articles. What actually came forth, however, was a beautifully integrated and thorough, tightly reasoned and exacting approach to the whole problem by a creative and reality-grounded philosopher-theologian. Perhaps being a layman, professor of philosophy at Georgetown University, and holding a PhD. in philosophy besides a licenciate in theology, helps bridge the gap between theory and commonsense reality.

What Dupré has achieved so well is "an attempt to situate the problem (of birth control and contraceptives) in the context of the Church's basic tradition." He has taken the most emphasized traditional argument of the natural law and shown it to be exceptionally enlightening and valid *when seen as the expression of man's nature as he lives it and as it develops in his daily activities* and not as an abstract static principle. In doing this he has stolen the opponent's thunder; he has turned inside out their ace argument against any form of human direction of the reproductive function and proven just the opposite. As he warns the reader of his conclusion in the Introduction, "I would agree with them that the precept of procreation results from the natural law, but I doubt whether this precept necessarily applies to each individual act of intercourse."

As a first step in his new appraisal, Dupré shows that "the view of marriage in both the Old and the New Testament does not necessarily exclude the use of contraception." The case of Onan and the impact of Augustine's subconscious Manichaean dualistic appreciation of original sin and the sexual union are set in perspective, leading up to the "problem of Ecclesiastical authority" as the sole basis for the condemnation of any form of birth control except rhythm and total abstinence.

Key to his thesis is his view of the "natural end and natural law." "That *nature's* intrinsic purpose in sexual activity is procreation does not imply that every single act must necessarily lead to procreation, since nature itself does not attain this end in each individual act." Dupré points out that, whereas moral theologians habitually avoid the dangerous abstraction of taking an act out of its human context in areas outside the sexual field, they repeatedly err by biological reductionism and abstraction in confusing man's biological nature with his human nature. Furthermore, he claims, they take "human nature as a static, unchangeable thing, rather than as a principle of development. . . . To talk about human nature as if it were an immutable entity, given in its entirety, is to ignore the most essential characteristic of *human* nature . . . man's natural law must necessarily be the law of a nature to whose essence growth and development belong." In speaking not just of the "pill" but of all contraceptives, Dupré claims that the fundamental question is: What makes an act good or bad? "If the use of contraceptives is *destructive of an absolute value of man*, it is certainly evil, and no circumstances can ever change this fact. But whether it is destructive of such a value or not depends upon the circumstances in which the contraceptives are used."

One of the most crucial applications made in this treatise is the adaptation of traditional arguments into support of the more recent view: "Since the primary end of marriage is not simply procreation (as is the 'natural' end of the *act* of marriage) but procreation *and* raising to adulthood of the offspring, it would seem that, at least in those cases where continence creates a tension between the parents which seriously harms the education of the children, the pursuit of the secondary end itself is essential for the *full* accomplishment of the primary end."

Dupré's presentation leaves few, if any, openings for criticism or retort from those holding the "traditional" position. And though the book is thin, it is not at all weak. It may well stand out as one of the first, if not the first, pieces of creative thinking to be done by an American moralist on this thorny question. Dupré has met the traditional arguments on their own ground and answered them in their own language while at the same time speaking plainly for the layman and making sense.

Real Life of the Tramp

My Autobiography. By Charles Chaplin. Simon and Schuster. $6.95.

by Howard Junker

THE TRAMP'S real life, like one of his films, is "a story with a smile and perhaps a tear." The only trouble with *My Autobiography:* Chaplin doesn't answer many how-why questions.

The tramp was born, for example, on any old day fifty years ago, by accident. Chaplin was new at Keystone; Sennett told him to suit up,

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they needed gags.

"I had no idea what make-up to put on. . . . However, on the way to the wardrobe I thought I would dress in baggy pants, big shoes, a cane and a derby hat. I wanted everything a contradiction. . . . I had no idea of the character. But the moment I was dressed, the clothes and the make-up made me feel the person he was."

And in response to Sennett's enthusiasm, Chaplin gave an off-the-cuff elaboration of the character.

In the book Chaplin never explains what the tramp meant to him, what he was trying to say in his films. He declares that the ideas for his films came by agonizing hard work and by chance. He shows himself sweating it out on the empty set trying to discover new comedy business. Or looking at stereoscopes of the Klondike at Douglas Fairbanks' house and getting the idea for *The Gold Rush*. But Chaplin skips production altogether. Beyond praising "simplicity of approach" he gives few clues to his method—either as writer, director, producer, actor, editor, or composer.

Nor does Chaplin place his films within the context of his life. They are his current headache, his latest success, or the work he must get back to.

More than his craft goes begging clarification. Chaplin treats the political mess which led to his leaving America as if he were a perfect innocent, like the tramp who, in trying to return a warning flag that has fallen from the back of a passing truck, finds himself leading a Red demonstration.

"Friends have asked me how I came to engender this American antangonism. My prodigious sin was, and still is, being a non-conformist. Although I am not a Communist I refused to fall in line by hating them. . . . Secondly, I was opposed to the Committee on Un-American Activities. . . . Thirdly, I have never attempted to become an American citizen."

To the Immigration Department, Chaplin said he "got into all this trouble" when asked to fill in for Joseph Davies, the former ambassador to Russia, as a speaker for Russian war relief. "I've had my knuckles rapped ever since."

This much being true, there is more, but Chaplin does not continue his analysis.

Chaplin's skill with reminiscence makes up for his lack of rigor as self-critic. He is liberal with anecdote, with litanies of friends, with resumés of conversation. The biographical data is there, plus a filmography (useful when Chaplin ignores chronology), plus 113 photos, plus the final speech from *The Great Dictator*. All this helps us to see the man behind the movies, but you wouldn't guess from the book itself why Chaplin was so marvelous.

I was most moved by his account of childhood. A vignette will suggest the quality which caused Chaplin to visit the scene of his early misery whenever he returned to London. Two months after the family lands in the workhouse, Mrs. Chaplin arranges for her discharge. She takes her two boys out, and they go to the park, buy half a pound of black cherries, play catch-ball with a crumpled newspaper, lunch on a twopenny teacake, a penny bloater, and two halfpenny cups of tea. "In the afternoon we made our way back to the workhouse. As Mother said with levity, 'We'll be just in time for tea.'"

Describing a much later stay at the Carlton, Chaplin says, "The saddest thing I can imagine is to get used to luxury."

The sadness in later life came from loneliness, from romantic disappointment. Chaplin refuses to be characterized as excessively lonely, as obsessed with melancholy and a nostalgia for the slums. Perspective established, it remains true that the clown masks another self. Chaplin had bad luck with assorted girls and three wives before the denouement of happiness with Oona O'Neill.

The power of sadness—he first mixed sentiment with slapstick in *The Kid* (1920)—seems to have struck Chaplin early. He runs into his first love a while after she had broken with him.

"I must have been sadly objective as I spoke about the possibility of her having a wonderful and happy life. 'You sound so wistful, I could almost cry,' she said.

"That night I went home feeling triumphant, for I had touched her with my sadness and made my personality felt."

The tramp was pathetic and courageous, a dualism of many traits. Chaplin had his share of complexity—including a touch of the Devil: he sold one thousand words from *My Autobiography* to the Soviet newspaper "Izvestia" for nine pounds of caviar.

Our Mass Communications

Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. By Marshall McLuhan. McGraw-Hill. $7.50.

By C. J. Fox

THIS IS an infuriating book. It offers a number of brilliant insights but mixes them in with some extravagantly turgid incoherencies. Adopting a tone of Machiavellian candor and acquiescence, Dr. McLuhan loftily records the death of the "literary-logical" spirit in Western Man. This results, he says, from the impact of contemporary mass communications such as television and the jet plane. We are passing out of the age of rationalistic individualism and into an era of "tribal" togetherness and oral culture.

The death of "linear logic" would be all the more lamentable if what Professor McLuhan presents as an intelligently conceived argument is any indication of how things will be in the post-logical phase of man's mental development. The book swarms with non-sequiturs, terminological confusion, sweeping statements unbacked by any evidence and a usage of dozens of quotations that does violence to their authors' meaning and sets new records for tendentious reasoning.

It was about time somebody took stock of the new social and intellectual situation caused by our advances in the techniques of mass education and mass hoax. Often Dr. McLuhan throws light on this situation by de-

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liberately adopting a new "mosaic" approach which he assumes is called for by the novelty of the futuristic inferno we inhabit. But he seemingly cannot resist going over the deep end with his generalizations on such varied social phenomena as the motor car, baseball and Body Odor. His deep-end plunges, conveniently, happen to suit his over-all theoretical purpose, as in his terming B. O. "the unique signature and declaration of human individuality." What he reads into the statements he attributes to varied authorities like Sir Lewis Namier, John Donne and Lynn White is enough to make one's old-fashioned "logical" flesh creep while his account of nationalism as, purely and simply, "an unforseen consequence of typography" is grotesquely inadequate.

Everything, and rightly so, is grist to Dr. McLuhan's ideological mill but too often he spoils his case by excessive indulgence of his fired-up imagination. He can be pictured as a prototype of the new "cosmic man" he insists is rapidly inheriting the earth. For him to have written a book (which he contends is a patently anachronistic medium of expression) is obviously a gross inconsistency on his part. Futhermore, the ear is more tolerant of verbal muddle than is the eye—Dr. McLuhan himself suggests as much. Thus, for at least these two reasons, he should have committed his socio-literary speculating to tape and left it at that.

In every physical respect, his book is a credit to the craft of Gutenberg, except for the lack of an appendix. This omission is doubly unfortunate because the intellectual stars mentioned and lavishly quoted almost defy counting. Yet one such Eminence is conspicuously absent: conspicuously so, since he seems to have had a profound influence on Professor McLuhan. Harold Innis was professor of political economy at the University of Toronto and delved deeply into the subject of communications and their effects on human history. By 1950, two years before his death, Innis had published material to which some of Dr. McLuhan's work seems to owe a great deal. In the 1950's the University of Toronto became a center of Innis-like speculations on "mass media" and in these Dr. McLuhan took a prominent part. The superbly far-out magazine *Explorations* reflected the findings of this far-northern think-colony. The professor himself published a manifesto called "Counterblast" in 1954, setting out what have remained his basic views and doing so in the spectacular typographical manner of Wyndham Lewis and the British Vorticists.

The author of *Understanding Media* started his career as a literary critic. Essentially he remains a man of letters rather than an historian or sociologist. This may account for the ring of ingenuous conviction that characterizes his highly questionable reflections on history. For him, man's fate since about 1450 has been determined by the invention and development of printing. That the adoption of printing may itself have been the result of even more profound factors—social, political or economic—never seems to occur to Professor McLuhan; whose eye is dogmatically focused on surface phenomena. His theory of printing as the prime mover of events is very flattering, of course, to a man whose métier is literature.

With an air of almost smug knowingness, the professor conducts his reader, more rattled by the minute, on a lightning tour of the modern Social Scene. He airily dismisses as the work of a "cultural reactionary" Daniel Boorstin's strictures on the "pseudo-event" in journalism and he dispenses with the impossible job of finding evidence for such statements as, "The book reader has always tended to be passive." Theory after technocratic theory is recited to explain phenomena like the denoting by reporters of the ages of individuals featured in news stories—this practice being attributed to the supposed discovery by journalists of "the iconic power of number." As for four-letter words, they are popular because of their "tactile-involving stress." Shakespeare draws patronizing praise for his "intuition of the transforming powers of new media." And so the heavy-handed rigmarole of Dr. McLuhan's argument lumbers on.

He claims to be firmly abreast of our fast-changing times. Yet he sounds peculiarly old-fashioned, indeed fatally so, in expounding the heart of his argument. The radically new thing he calls "electric technology" renders the globe, so he contends, a mere village where people "are involved in all others at all times."

And in one passage that, oddly enough, reflects a nostalgia in this frenetic futurist for an idyllic social arrangement long gone, he perorates: "The human family (under the electric influences) becomes one tribe again." But surely the sense of community inculcated by media like television lacks the flesh-and-blood rapport of the tribal situation or, for that matter, of the village life which he apparently pines after. At most, these vast new forces produce merely a two-dimensional sense of "togetherness," as unphysical and novel as an electrically induced trance. The vision of a Golden Age Restored which Professor McLuhan gives as the upshot of his sometimes zany narrative does anything but bear out his pretensions to being hard-boiled and omniscient concerning the nature and direction of our addled age.

Not From Here

Leah. By Seymour Epstein. Little, Brown. $4.95.

by Anita Feldman

SEYMOUR EPSTEIN has been described (by the London *Times*) as a writer who expresses "an ethos that has rejected in dismay the materialistic premises of the American Way of Life. Mr. Epstein could be a beatnik who has slipped, heavily disguised, into the enemy's camp." If this were true, his latest novel, *Leah*, would be more interesting than it is, and his other work less so.

Epstein's fiction deals with modes of consciousness whose conflict is not so much a matter of disparity as of incommensurability. What is interesting is not the subversion of one world by another, but his depiction of each of them in a manner which does not diminish their reality, or, in spite of touches of comic irony, lighten their weight.

Epstein deals with realities pretty much on their own terms. His assumption of a style which allows his work to pass as "light reading with

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an afterthought" is more than a disguise, for the enemy camp is as present in him as he is in it. But Epstein's novels are more interesting when he is dealing with a wider range of experience than that of *Leah*, and a consistent set of values – even beatnik values – would sharpen the picture in dealing with an isolated character's rather limited horizons.

Leah covers several weeks in the life of an unmarried woman in her middle thirties, a wintry period in which she is exposed to the desperate intensities of fantasy, her own and others', and the degree of volition left her seems no more than the opportunity to participate in her own punishment. If "to be in hell is to drift," the time covered by the book is a season in hell. Leah's emotional crises seem to be deflected from the shining surfaces, the endless diffusion of the city. Unemphasized but real is the sense of a short circuit in these intensities—they are deflected, at the time of Leah's greatest need, from their appropriate connections.

When his first novel, *Pillar of Salt*, was published in 1960, Epstein wrote, "I think the most significant thing I can say of myself is that I was born in New York, grew up in New York and have continued to live and work in New York." The mind is its own place, but New York is also very hard to get away from. As one of his short-story characters says, "If you can't make it here, you can't make it anywhere." Yet for the native New Yorker the landscape of value and the landscape of emotion are uniquely, inextricably meshed, uniquely, inextricably in conflict. As one who shares this condition, I think one of its significant characteristics is a susceptibility to the final, fatal conviction (like Chekhov contemplating the dream of going to Moscow) that one never really gets there. Chekhovian, too, is his characters' patient, stubborn wrestling with illusion, the disease of love or hope.

As in his other works, Epstein's image of the city remains in the background of *Leah*, speaking of "creation and joy," "a nighttime

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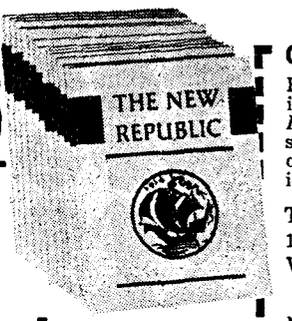

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fairyland of lights." And, as in his other works, landscape — psychologically, the landscape of obsession —dominates action. When Leah's father, in his sixties, has an insight into the nature of his beloved illusion, Leah reflects that it should make him a changed man. That it does not leads her to a distinction between truths artistic and practical.

Toward the end of the novel there is a passage in which "'I think I am going out of my mind,' Leah said aloud, knowing full well that she would never go out of her mind, that going out of her mind was simply not her style, not her escape." Extremities like madness, despair and violence do enter the lives of Epstein's characters, but are not their natural element, and retain, even in touching them, a certain unreality. And their actions are meaningful in terms of commitment, rather than effectiveness.

The book suffers from the silence of the characters who do act, and the self-absorption of those who talk. At one point Dave, Leah's new boyfriend, says "It seems to me that last Saturday and Sunday I did nothing but talk about myself. So I thought, what can we talk about? And do you know, I made the frightening discovery that there is practically nothing to talk about . . . What we're really interested in is ourselves." Leah, thinking of Tom Williams, the one character who seems to come from the country of passion, violence, extremity, realizes that "she had no experience with men who looked on personal crisis as a solitary affair." But between Tom's silence and Dave's talk there is really little to choose.

The middle-class New York milieu of *Leah*, and of Epstein's other work, is one in which the question of money and the question of action are closely related, in which the claims of bread, love, loyalty and work are often in conflict, and the sources of the conflict are actually, as well as psychically, present in the characters' lives. They have fathers, mothers, siblings, childhood friends, and their relatedness to these people, or lack of it, is in no way an accident of geography. Not to invoke a new canon of unity for fiction, it seems to me that this imaginative territory is worth further exploration.

But there is a sense of diffusion and blankness in *Leah* which seems to arise from the unnecessarily narrow range of experience with which it deals. Our image of Leah is so close, throughout the book, that it tends to blur—then, when she finally reaches a crisis of consciousness, we are lifted out of her point of view and into that of an impersonal "one."

At the point where Leah changes her life we are excluded from the process and the psychic consequences of the change. Even this would not be so important, since action is not the point of the book, if Epstein had more resources in the matter of language. But, just as his characters do not, with rare exceptions, take leave of either their right senses or their native city, his style does not depart from a modest realism in which, when truth speaks, it is with "a voice dry and lifeless enough to be prophetic." In a locked-in narrative, it appears, a touch of the poet or a touch of the madman must be brought to bear. Considering Epstein's stylistic limitations and his central character's persistent sanity, what *Leah* seems to indicate is that "you can't get there from here."

Swan of Cambrai

Fenelon: Letters of Love And Counsel. Translated by John McEwen. Harcourt. $4.95.

by John Ratté

THE TENSIONS, paradoxes, glories and limitations of the religious world of France in the *Ancien Régime* can be summed up in two words: Bossuet, Fenelon—or in the sobriquet symbolism of the seventeenth century, the *Eagle of Meaux* and *The Swan of Cambrai.* The political genius of Bossuet has a lesser place in historical memory than his talents as preacher and educator of kings—and perhaps this is fortunate, since our age does not find *realpolitik* attractive in the clergy; but Fenelon's life was, and is, more of a piece.

This tidy selection of excerpts from the personal correspondence

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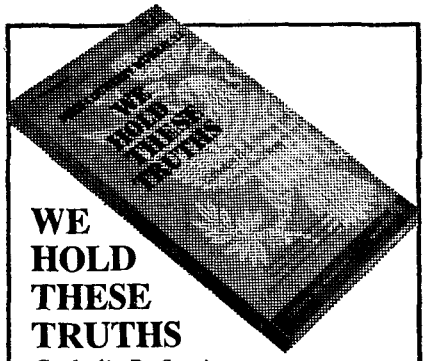

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of the one-time confidant of the mystic and quietist Mme. Guyon, exiled from the court of Louis XIV for a brave and Christian refusal to join in the destruction of that eccentric old lady by men who insist on destroying the heretic as well as the heresy, shows us various levels of personal intimacy and degrees of religious intensity: but certain themes are constant and clear throughout. A remarkable clarity of expression is combined with a psychological perception both simple and profound. As when Fenelon tells a mother: "There is one thing I would most strongly urge upon your son, and that is never to speak without thinking. By doing so one falls insensibly into the habit of saying things that are not strictly true because one has given expression to them before giving any thought to what they mean."

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REVIEWERS

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And, most eloquent to us today, there is the insistence on a rigorous and positive tolerance, as when he writes to an academician: "The desire to force others to agree with one on matters which have been decided neither by the church nor by any consensus of learned opinion is nothing but intellectual tyranny. Moreover, when you find your friends and other wise men divided on a particular issue, leave the dispute to them and adhere quietly to your own opinions. It is enough for you to seek out the truth with a well-balanced mind."

Thomas Merton asks, in his sympathetic introduction to these well-translated selections: "Has the time finally come for Fenelon to be appreciated as he deserves? Perhaps that time will never come." I should say that we are doomed if it has not. This book should help.

ART

Van Gogh and Expressionism

THE VOLUBLE and volatile hero of Turgenev's *Rudin* once said that "the grandeur of the discoveries of genius is that they become the heritage of all." The grander they are, the greater the range of the benefits, and the more independent the heirs.

What is Van Gogh to Expressionism or Expressionism to Van Gogh? He may be the Father of modern Expressionism in the sense of the first or the greatest, but few Expressionists are truly his sons. Expressionism is a word descriptive of his treasure, but that treasure was so ample that it could be generously scattered to the winds. His most able heirs made something entirely new of it. Our American abstract-expressionists are prime examples: the dynamic gestures of Kline and the analysis-in-depth of Pollock are far-flung echoes of Van Gogh's "to paint what I feel and feel what I paint."

The Guggenheim Museum's recent exhibition in New York City, entitled *Van Gogh and Expressionism* is an event which opens one's eyes to the singularity of the best Expressionists. This is exactly as it should be, except that a certain incoherence is the result of Mr. Maurice Tuchman's presentation of Van Gogh *in extenso*, as if a dominant *paterfamilias*, and the other artists in the subordinate place of relatives. To succeed in this plan the examples allotted the relatives should have been either uniformly limited—to present them purely in relation to Van Gogh—or else a more balanced presentation of Expressionists as a family group, with Van Gogh as *primus inter pares*—or if not *pares inter alia*. As it is, the Guggenheim exhibit seems to vacillate between these two objectives, on the one hand presenting rather uncharacteristic Matisses, and on the other presenting Kandinsky whole.

Kandinsky rockets way out of a "relative" orbit and Rouault is so profoundly Rouault that he also resists any "relative" niche unless severely restricted to that rôle. The largely represented Ensor, Kokoschka and Kirchner are given a weight that is derived rather than actual. While beyond a doubt all these artists wield an Expressionist brush, the exhibit tends to break apart into a show of Van Gogh, plus a group of other modern artists.

In its didactic purpose this exhibit is a less successful one than last year's Guggenheim exposition of *Cézanne and Structure in Modern Painting*. Perhaps it is easier to trace the influence of a formal insight than of an insight so close to the fountainhead of creative inspiration. Every creative insight has a formal envelope and vice versa, but in the case of Cézanne the envelope fits like a glove and therefore the mutations are visually intimate. By its very nature Van Gogh's fresh insight demanded formal fireworks from the modern expressionist to embody his own vital feeling, and this leads to far-reaching differences on both levels.

Perhaps a didactic or "teaching" sort of exhibit is not a good idea unless it has a much larger scope; *The Splendid Century* (the French

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17th) at the Metropolitan Museum two years ago is a successful one that comes to mind. Useful as critical analysis of relationships may be, it seems a great deal more can be felt and seen by the public—and even learnt—through exhibitions of individual artists in depth. The best group exhibitions are those that are more loosely proposals, in my opinion: *New Images of Man* (Museum of Modern Art, several years ago), *Black and White Painting* (Jewish Museum, last winter). Otherwise group exhibitions of close technical connections—*Geometric Abstraction* (Whitney, three years ago) or *20th Century Drawings* (the Guggenheim last winter)—are far more satisfying.

The best part of the Guggenheim exhibit are the Van Gogh paintings, and the high-point of these may well be the *Portrait of Dr. Gachet*—like most of them, from a private collection, and therefore rarely on view. It dazzles the viewer with its expressive force, and with the formal control of the explosive elements of line and color that Van Gogh reins in. The hallucinatory eyes of the subject rivet the painting; they are drastically different from those eyes of portraits that are said to follow you about a room. The eyes of Dr. Gachet are seen by Van Gogh looking at him, and this is a portrait of an artist seen by a doctor as much as of a doctor seen by an artist, so embodied is the creator in the created image.

Of course, that is exactly what Van Gogh set out to do. The effect is particularly startling in a portrait, and very rarely achieved or attempted except in self-portraits. Rouault's *Portrait of Monsieur X* (said to be an imaginary one) for all the deadly expressive substance it gives to his view of the bourgeoisie, does not reflect the subject's view of the artist as well. Another portrait in this exhibition, Vlaminck's portrait of the poet Apollinaire, despite its superficial technical affinities, is even further from that identification that Van Gogh creates.

Van Gogh succeeded, to a greater degree than any other Expressionist, in putting the artist in the picture.

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